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EDITORIAL

The Problem of Forgiveness

Recently there appeared as a topic in the draft programme of a European student conference "the German Problem". When we enquired if Germans were to be present, the answer was : no. When we suggested that it was scarcely profitable to continue discussing the future of a people in their absence, there was an outburst of indignation at our lack of perception. Surely there is no issue about which there is liable to be more misunderstanding and disagreement today than the relationship between the former "allied" and former "axis" nations.

This is not the place to deal with the political misunderstanding and disagreement : the several zones into which Germany remains divided with their differing conceptions and methods ; the contradictions in the policy of the Western powers towards former enemies ; the arbitrary isolation of Japan. It has of course been maddening to know that "allied" educational officers, as well as our pre-war friends in these countries, were anxious for materials and contacts from the outside and, at the same time, to be delayed by obsolete restrictions with regard to sending in books, and journals to help them. But far more important for the future certainly of German students, and possibly of Japanese students, in the total world university

body is our inability to make up our minds upon the basis of our meeting them again. The clash between opposing points of view led to the long drawn out discussion from the summer of 1945 until the end of 1946 within World Student Relief as to whether German students should be normally included in its work. It involved the sending of a costly and hard-working commission of four student leaders of differing political backgrounds into Germany, and undignified bargaining in committees about percentages of relief. Now the way is clear within W.S.R. for help to Germany, and Japan, but it has been so far a Pyrrhic victory since the resources available are so slender, and their employment so complicated. The mountain of our first post-war controversy seems to have brought forth a mouse!

The controversy itself has been confused. On the one side — for delay — were most of the men of the Resistance, whether nationalistic or communistic in their opinions, and on the other side — for speedy action — were most of the Anglo-Saxons, whether Christian realists or pacifists. The first group knew from the start that they were bound to be in the long run the losers and fought a stubborn rear-guard action; the second group were impeded by their knowledge of the courage and sufferings of their opponents and pressed the attack clumsily. Yet two good results have come from the discussion, apart from the vindication of W.S.R. as a world relief agency working on a basis of need.

The first result is that we can see the strengths and weaknesses of the opposing positions more clearly. The men and women of the occupied countries may tend to flog the dead horse of fascism, but they know what fascism means. The students from neutral, or English-speaking, countries may be able to view international relationships more objectively, but they cannot always wholly escape the charge of showing more active sympathy at this stage with those whom they have defeated than with their comrades in the struggle. In short we have learnt more about human nature in tackling a burning problem.

The second result is that we have been forced to look again at the essential meaning of Christianity. Some Christian leaders and students have played a fine part in this controversy, largely by showing that they could see the faults in their own group and stand against them. We shall not forget three Christian utterances at the Cambridge I.S.S. Conference of July 1945, which resulted in a Frenchman being disowned by his national delegation for his emphasis on Christian charity, an Englishman showing that an ex-serviceman could be generous to his foes, and a Chinese restoring our sense of proportion.

The Christian discussion was taken further at the Federation General Committee in August 1946. Informal groups of Germans and Dutch, and Germans and French, met together to face their differences in the context of a Christian fellowship. This discussion found its expression in the Resolution, which was printed in *The Student World*, Fourth Quarter 1946, and which is reprinted in this editorial. But even this resolution does not end our enquiry. It uses the great word "forgiveness" as the Christian key for both victors and vanquished to the difficult entry into post-war relationships. But what exactly do we mean by forgiveness?

* * *

There seem to be two limitations in our thinking about forgiveness — one in width, and one in depth. We have some knowledge, perhaps a saving knowledge, of God's forgiveness of us as individuals and of our consequent obligation to forgive other individuals. But how this relates to groups of people, to whole peoples, we are not very clear. We vaguely suppose that a multiplicity of acts of personal forgiveness on God's part, or on the part of Christians, is the answer to this problem. Is it?

Our second limitation is in the shallowness of our conception of forgiveness. We are so apt to say "let's forgive and forget" with the idea that the two actions are

practically identical. The horrors of concentration camps, or of aerial warfare upon civilians, are in one sense better forgotten, but in another sense must be forgiven before they can ever be forgotten. Our conception of individual sin is weak, and so our conception of corporate sin is practically non-existent.

A study of a familiar, perhaps too familiar, petition should help us with these aspects of the problem of forgiveness. "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." There is no mention of individual forgiveness in the Lord's Prayer, only of corporate forgiveness. Our individual forgiveness is only assured in the context of God's forgiving love for all mankind. That forgiveness is personal but it embraces the communities of men. And so must our forgiveness. Are there whole groups of people whom we detest, though we make exceptions of individuals? Then it is the groups that we must learn to forgive. In all racial conflicts there are good personal relationships, and these must be multiplied, but it is not in their multiplication that the real solution lies, but in the change of heart of a group towards a group. And the Church should not just be the place where reconciliation between individuals occurs, but the community which forgives because it has been forgiven.

The relation between God's forgiveness of us, and our forgiveness of others is insoluble at the shallow level. Does the second phrase in the petition mean that God's forgiveness is conditional? Or that of course we shall be decent to others because God has forgiven us? It means neither. We are forced to take sin more seriously if we are to understand the intimate connection between God's dealing with us, and our dealing with our fellowmen. And here the problem of post-war relationships should help us. The Resolution of the General Committee speaks in no measured terms of the evil done by both sides in the conflict, and being perpetuated today. The Christian is not someone who glosses over the sins of his enemies because he is the servant of a kindly God. Rather he is one who knows how greatly he stands in need of forgiveness, and, therefore,

can understand more fully the true nature of other men's actions. Knowing these actions for what they are, not so much offences against himself, as offences against the majesty of God such as he himself acknowledges, he can and must forgive others, as he seeks, a broken man, to implore the forgiveness of God. So, as we come to realise how God is judging us, we can face the evil of others, and there comes into our hearts the knowledge that, as evil is all of a piece, so is forgiveness. The faults of other individuals, groups and peoples become ours, and we know that there is no longer any point in being indignant, or estranged, only in imploring the Divine forgiveness, which alone is creative in the realm of human relationships.

We are approaching the Oslo Conference, and must ask a pertinent question : what is the value of international conferences of youth ? They may certainly have negative results, such as the adoption of too easy solutions and the confirmation of prejudices. A Christian conference can have one specific contribution to make to world relationships. It can bear witness to that fellowship which depends upon the forgiveness of God, and upon mutual forgiveness, and so it can offer to the world "a new creation of incalculable political importance".

R.C.M.

The Relationship between Victorious and Defeated Nations

"The national-socialist and fascist dictatorships with their system of violence, violation of pledges, atrocities, bestial cruelties, racial arrogance and claims to the hegemony of one people over its neighbours have brought immeasurable suffering to the nations, deprived countless individuals and families of their freedom, possessions and life, destroyed peaceful work and economic prosperity, and by these means radically undermined confidence and trust between the nations.

"On all sides these facts have raised a vast tide of hatred, revulsion and indignation and have resulted in a serious accusation being brought against the nations which not only tolerated such things, but actively supported and advanced them. They also constitute at the present time — and will perhaps constitute for a long time to come — a grave danger to the cooperation of the different national movements within the Federation.

"On the other hand it must not be forgotten that other nations also shared in the responsibility for the growth and terrible consequences of the totalitarian systems. Through their own selfishness, passivity, opportunism and lack of unity and vision, they allowed this fatal power to develop. Further it must be recognised that history has not come to an end with the termination of hostilities, and that the use of power by the victorious nations has produced and is still producing examples of gross disregard for human value, human rights and life itself. We wish in this respect especially to mention the abolition of national independence and the partial deportation of people, who against their will have been drawn into the conflict between the great powers. The inevitable results of such actions among the people of the occupied countries will be new feelings of hatred and a desire for vengeance.

"From the standpoint of Christian faith the root-evil which lies below both the crimes of the one side, and the acts and omissions of the other, is the same evil of human self-glorification which found its most terrible culmination within the political sphere in different acts of complete arbitrariness. But, in the personal sphere, it finds corresponding expression wherever lies, arrogance, lack of consideration and sexual licentiousness gain the upper hand, and make all human community impossible. This is what the Bible calls sin, and it makes clear that this condition has its roots in the fact that man will not recognise the sovereignty of God, but cuts himself off from God and proclaims his own sovereignty and freedom.

"Convinced that in this sense we are all guilty before God and continually victims of the same temptation, the

Federation lays on the heart and conscience of all its associated movements and their members the necessity of examining before God their past and present conduct, and confessing their sin against God and men. Only thus can the way be opened for a clear experience of God's mercy revealed in the cross of Jesus Christ; and only by the cross of Jesus Christ, and only by the forgiveness of our sins through the Cross, can there be created a new fellowship. The Federation is conscious that, for many students in our movements, meeting and collaboration with members of former enemy nations is not to be taken easily as a matter of course. It is only through the forgiveness of God, which calls us at the same time to mutual forgiveness, that the wonderful gift of a completely new beginning and true fellowship is bestowed. This fellowship has not only a personal significance within the scope of our Christian work, but it is a new creation of incalculable political importance in an age when mankind is preparing to take the path of moral and physical self-destruction.

"The Federation urges all its members to do the utmost in their power that the post-war world may not be built on hatred, but on the sure foundation of that forgiveness of God which alone can unite men, and which in the national and political sphere is the only possible foundation for real reconstruction. Every member of the Federation bears the responsibility for the proclamation of this Christian message and its realisation in action — in things great and small — so that thereby God's will may be done to His glory and for the salvation of mankind."

Guilt and Forgiveness

J. DIRKSE

One of the most important statements of the Federation General Committee of 1946 is without any doubt the *Resolution on the Relationship between Victorious and Defeated Nations*. The value of the statement, however, depends a good deal upon the use made of it. When in the countries and Movements concerned we just take notice of the document and then put it *ad acta*, its value is extremely limited. It then is only an expression of the convictions of those who were present at the Château de Bossey, there and then; it only tells something about the mood in which we met those who had been on the other side of the battle — we from the 'victorious' nations — and that is all. It is not representative and one might ask whether we did not use too big words and too heavily loaded expressions. Therefore we cannot keep silent about this 'resolution'. It has to be brought into discussion again and again. *Causa non finita est*. On the contrary, we have just started. The Resolution is an effort to try and bring our thoughts and our discussions on to the right level.

The statement does not only judge dictatorship and hatred, it does not only point out the responsibility of the "other" (i. e. victorious) nations, it does not even only show the roots of evil on "both sides", but it expresses the fact that we are *all guilty before God* and it calls us to *mutual forgiveness*. It is not easy to accept one's guilt — on both sides. It is difficult to forgive — on both sides. So difficult that we do not manage either to confess our guilt or to forgive our former enemy unless before God, under the Cross of Jesus Christ. Now my fear is that we take that for granted, and manage to talk of guilt and forgiveness in a much too

easy manner. Lots of people are able to "forgive" without any difficulty. Forgiveness for them is something like fair play, like a duty of sportsmanship. The war is over now, you cannot be enemies for ever. *Schwamm d'rüber!*

But that is not forgiveness! In the same way people could accept their "guilt". But it is not so easily done, for it is against our self-respect, against our pride to say: it is our... fault. The fault of Hitler *cum suis* of course, but, as one is a German, well — it is my fault.

But fault is not the same as guilt. And that again is the difficulty! When somebody is fair enough to take the responsibility not only of private but even of collective "fault", what can one do but accept it and say "that's o.k."? You can even feel a bit sour afterwards, but you are ready to swallow that down. Of course! Let's try to be good friends. But *guilt!* But *forgiveness!*

Collective guilt and forgiveness

Is it true that we touch here one of the crises of our religious life? Have we not lost the real meaning of some essential words, which nevertheless are still in use by force of conservatism, words which once had the gold-backing of God's Revelation, but are now circulating without much value in these modern times of spiritual inflation — easily spent and easily received as small change — and hardly anybody remembers the original rate? Only one or two well-to-do professors avariciously keep a rare gold-coin in a secret little drawer of theology. I fear that we have nearly lost the real meaning of the words *guilt* and *forgiveness*, the notion that it is *mere nonsense* to speak of guilt and forgiveness apart from God, apart from Jesus Christ, that is, apart from faith! That it is absurd to make anybody responsible for what he has not "done" personally, for what he "could not help", unless he is a Christian, unless he has learned to accept in faith the

solidarity with his neighbours, with his country, and with the 'world'! Therefore it was nonsense what I wrote about 'collective *fault*', not only in English, but in thought! Only before God does a man lose his privateness so definitely that he can be made responsible for what another did! But in *guilt* this *is* included, that which my people did or my government omitted — even if I did not agree with my people or my government and openly or secretly spoke or acted against it!

We cannot expect and we may not claim that Germany or Japan should confess guilt. But we *must* ask it from each German or Japanese, who is a Christian. And that *not* to satisfy our own sense of justice but for the sake of Germany and Japan themselves. For Germany and Japan (and Great Britain and New Zealand and... Holland) do have guilt — before God and men — but only the Christians, only the Church can confess that guilt and can receive forgiveness — again from God and men. *The Church has a priestly function.*

Likewise it is absurd to ask *forgiveness* from a nation or from an unbeliever. A nation asks for compensation and the man in the street asks for reprisals or retaliation, when the enmity of these war-years went to his heart and nerves, as it was with many a man or woman in the formerly occupied countries; or if he is superficial enough or sportsman enough he says that the war is over now and you must not hate till the end of time.

But there is more solidarity in suffering than in doing evil, and also the man who came through in our formerly occupied countries, even when he knows nothing of Christian solidarity, is hindered in getting rid of that sense of actual enmity towards the Germans and Japanese by the memory of what his fellow-countrymen suffered in Auschwitz or Burma. We Christians too have to face the queer and subtle question: *When we are ready to forgive, are we not then betraying the memory of our brethren and sisters, our friends of the Resistance, our Jewish fellow-countrymen, the convictions we stood for, the vocation we obeyed with the risk of our*

lives and the well-being of those dearest to us on earth ? That is the temptation of all who learned what enmity was in reality, the temptation to be "faithful" and have arguments to follow the inclination of their hearts, claiming retaliation, punishment, "righteousness"; and they find a ground to cover these claims in the Old Testament !

The difficulty of forgiveness

Forgiveness is so difficult because I am not allowed to be a single individual. As a Christian I am bound in solidarity with those thousands and millions who suffered — with the dead and their widows and orphans. I may not isolate myself in the act of forgiveness, just as the German student I happen to meet is not permitted — when he is a Christian — to be just a private person, but is a "representative" with his people and country "behind" him. For that reason all resentments of five years of hell will come back to me in such moments of encounter and it is no good to deny them, lest my forgiveness be unreal. I frankly admit that I am irritated by the fellow's "typical German" features and attitude — stupid as it may be ; I am annoyed by his complaints of the emergency situation in his country, by the lack of *Leidensfähigkeit* of the German people — unrighteous as that is ! But only *with* resentments and irritation and annoyance am I the complete person I am, just as *he* is not the real man he is without *his* resentments against the Allies and their "occupation", without his regret over the lost war, without his pride, and so on and so forth.

In the act of confession of guilt as well as in the act of forgiveness you have to be your real self, or there is no good in it at all, it is just hypocrisy ! That makes it awfully difficult.

That is why all this is a human impossibility. Only God can realise it, through His Holy Spirit. Only under the Cross of Jesus Christ does it happen that two enemies

confess their guilt — both ! Guilt is not on one side only, although there are gradations of guilt ! (Niebuhr : equality of sin, inequality of guilt.) Receiving the grace and forgiveness of Jesus Christ the impossible becomes yet possible, and former enemies become friends !

When I realise what the — perhaps a bit too much *talked* of — fellowship of the Federation means, I remember with great joy and thankfulness difficult conversations, which ended in prayer, with German ex-soldiers, now my friends in Christ.

Christian Forgiveness

B. B. KEET

Not without reason do we speak of the Christian concept of forgiveness, for there is a real difference between the Christian and other interpretations of the same idea. Among other examples I may perhaps refer to the impious dictum that it is God's *métier* to forgive, which makes a benevolent tyrant of God, one who takes no account of justice or holiness, or even repentance, but doles out His mercy promiscuously without regard to the consequences. Or I may refer to the well-known phrase : To know all is to forgive all, which is only partially true. To know all may be to forgive much, but it can never wholly remove personal responsibility and personal guilt. The presupposition here is that there really is no sin or transgression to forgive ; ignorance of all the circumstances has led to the mistaken idea that there has been such a departure from the straight path of duty, but adequate information will prove that forgiveness is really not necessary ; it only appeared so because we were not fully informed as to all the circumstances.

And if guilt must be allocated somewhere it should be attributed to the social environment which fashioned such an abnormal moral subject.

Forgiveness rooted in justice

The Christian concept of forgiveness cannot be divorced from the idea of righteousness and justice, for the simple reason that it is rooted in the Christian revelation according to which God is not only our merciful Father, but also our holy and righteous Lord, Whose sovereign will is the cause of our existence and the norm of our conduct. The trouble arises when we regard the attributes of God not as a unity in diversity, but as opposed to one another. Hence the misleading representation in the old hymn of mercy pleading with justice. In the Christian revelation mercy acts through and by means of justice, not in opposition to it. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son — that was the means by which He expressed His love, by the gift of His Son for a sinful world in order that His love should find expression without a denial of His righteousness and holiness. Look at it from whatever angle you like, any interpretation of the Christian Gospel which fails to take account of the so-called “juridical” aspect of the death of Christ, can never really appreciate the greatness and depth of the love of God to a sinful world. How else can His death be seen in all its bitterness and despair? “Either the death of Christ was the atonement for human sin or it fills one with terror and despair” (R. W. Dale). God’s love and God’s righteousness are one and the place which reveals this unity more than anything else is the Cross of Christ. God’s love could not be given at the cost of His holiness, else He would have been untrue to Himself.

Without a doubt this “juridical” relation transcends all that we mean by our ordinary conceptions of law and external obligation. It has to do with law but in a much higher sense, in the sense namely that the

supreme will of God is the law governing our whole existence as His creatures. Therefore sin, in the Scriptural sense, always includes the element of unlawfulness ; it can only be understood as transgression, as the inversion of good which arises from conformity to the law of God. All true justice is based on the creative right of God to control the life of man whom He has placed in a relation of responsibility to Himself and his fellow-man. Somehow thus forgiveness must be connected with the divine purpose for His whole creation. Unless we realize the guilt of sin we shall never appreciate the miracle of forgiveness. Both of these — the sense of guilt and the experience of forgiveness — are intensely personal. So often we are ready to allocate guilt in all directions forgetting our own personal responsibility ; this makes sin a relation to an external law, legalistic transgression which will never resolve itself into a personal conviction of sin — compare the Pharisee in the parable.

Forgiveness as an act of God

Our sense of forgiveness goes hand in hand with our sense of sin. Indeed it would be difficult to conceive how there would be any need for forgiveness where there is no guilt. If sin were nothing else but weakness or imperfection or our heritage of animality from primitive man, then there would be no sense in forgiveness and we should have to review our false conception of guilt. But if sin is recognised for what it is, guilt against God Who created us according to His image and Whom we must glorify, then forgiveness has real meaning.

Now the gospel of Jesus Christ is just the message which tells us how our sins have been forgiven by way of the Cross, not by ignoring the heinous character of our guilt but by emphasising the stark reality of it, in the death of His beloved Son. Forgiveness thus proves to be an act of God which could not be performed without the greatest sacrifice and the love of God a revelation of His being which could not be granted

unconditionally. If forgiveness is the *métier* of God in Heine's sense then it would be very easy to forgive; but if it includes the atonement of guilt and the restitution of the true relation between God and man, then God alone can truly forgive because He alone can fulfil the conditions. We must never forget that God's love concerned a sinful world and to prove that love Christ died on the cross. He died for our sins in a sense which cannot be interpreted merely as an example for us to follow, but as a deed which made God's love to us possible and real.

Against this background, or rather, in this setting we must seek to understand the meaning of forgiveness, one towards another. Scripture exhorts us to forgive one another because Christ has forgiven us. "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4: 32). So also Christ exhorts us to love even our enemies, an injunction surely which finds its motive in the fact that Christ died for us while we were yet sinners. His love went out to a hostile world; not because of its attractiveness did He love the world, but in spite of its repulsiveness, in the knowledge that love would prove the means by which the transformation would be achieved. It is important however to note that God loves the sinner and not a more or less reformed and perfect being; this fact has a definite bearing on our relations to one another.

The proof of forgiveness in forgiving

Perhaps the most striking example of Christ's teaching in this respect is found in His parable of the Unforgiving Servant. It was spoken as a direct answer to Simon Peter's question: "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Till seven times?" Jesus saith unto him: "I say not unto thee, till seven times, but until seventy times seven" (Mat. 18: 21-22). Then follows the parable of the kingdom of heaven

likened unto a certain king who took account of his servants one of whom owed him ten thousand talents. This colossal and unpayable debt was graciously and freely cancelled. "But the same servant went out and found one of his fellow-servants which owed him one hundred pence and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying: Pay me that thou owest. And his fellow-servant fell down at his feet and besought him saying: Have patience with me and I will pay thee all. And he would not, but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt." When the king heard the story of his ungrateful, unforgiving servant he delivered him to the tormentors till he should pay all that was due to him. Of course the debt remained an unpayable one; so if this parable means anything it surely means that he who does not forgive has himself neither received forgiveness; he does not know what forgiveness is. Conversely, when the sinner has accepted forgiveness in Christ the duty of forgiving is no longer an injunction laid upon him, but is the natural consequence of his acceptance of forgiveness in Christ. In short, Christian life and Christian experience is the fitting environment in which forgiveness should be as natural as the air we breathe. It is that or it is nothing. There can be no two ways about it: either you are forgiving even as Christ forgave you, or you are unforgiving and no Christian.

The same truth is illustrated in the words of the Saviour when He taught us to pray: Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. The latter is not the ground but the proof of the forgiveness we obtain in answer to our prayer. Or take the case of the woman who was a sinner and anointed the feet of Jesus: "Therefore I say unto thee, her sins which are many are forgiven, for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little". Obviously the love that shone from her act of self-denial was not the cause but the effect of her forgiveness; she loved much because much had been forgiven her. Surely she had obtained

mercy long before she came to anoint the feet of Jesus, and the fact that she came in this way is a clear indication of the renewal of her character.

Forgiveness in wider relationships

Now, what does this all boil down to when we make the application to ourselves, to the relations existing between groups and nations and races? Speaking from the South African angle, where we have to do with most of the major problems of the day, my first remark would be that it is only from the Christian standpoint that we can both comprehend the measure of our own culpability and (not only exercise toleration but also) attain to real forgiveness which is perfected in love. It is in no sense of boasting, but with profound gratitude that I dare testify to the fact that in the constituency of the Students' Christian Association we find the most sympathetic understanding among the races of this race-conscious country. Nobody will be so naive as to think that the Christian approach is going to solve all difficulties at a stroke; at any rate it will guarantee an honest endeavour and one that is actuated by a sense of justice as well as charity. As it affects the international situation I can see no other way but the way of conversion to Christian faith and thought.

My second remark, if the first may appear too utopian, is more realistic. Let us continue to testify to the way of Christian forgiveness in season and out of season even if we have to content ourselves with the next best, viz. to bring others to approximate as closely as possible to the Christian way. After all Christianity is not so other-worldly in its ideology that it will not appeal to all who share with us the basic characteristics of human personality and human attainment. Of course it will entail absolute loyalty to our Lord and Master, and of course we shall have to face up to all the costs. It will be no easy way, but the way of Christian forgiveness never can be easy.

The Urgency of Forgiveness

ALEX JOHNSON

"No blood shed, no remission of sins!"

"Love is always hopeful".

Some people think it is easy to forgive. If anyone asks their forgiveness for something they readily say: Of course I forgive you. Forgiveness seems to be a matter of course of them. It does not cost much, but it does not mean very much either. And it does not establish a new relationship with him who has been forgiven. But the opposite mentality is also found. There are people who are slow to forget, or who can never forget at all. Their thoughts circle round the injustice they have suffered. Forgiveness is for them something impossible and unjust, and even if they forgive formally, their attitude is not altered. And a new relationship with the one who asks for forgiveness is not created.

One might possibly, though somewhat sweepingly, suggest that men can be divided into two corresponding categories in their thinking about God. The first group find it natural and normal that God should forgive, when we ask Him for His forgiveness. For them that raises no problems. Of course God forgives, for He is love. And that God should be love is obvious to them; what else could He be? This attitude is caricatured in the saying: "*Pardonner c'est Son métier*". But just because the forgiveness of God has never been a problem for them, it never becomes quite real. They *know* that God is love, and they know that man is a sinner, but the tension between these two poles never becomes so great that the spark of forgiveness can leap over and establish contact, fellowship. The other group feel in their hearts that forgiveness is unjust. They cannot

reconcile themselves to the idea that the thief on the Cross should accompany Jesus to Paradise, whereas an excellent man, who has fulfilled his duty towards his family, society and God, may remain outside. They may themselves pray for God's forgiveness, for they are honest enough to realise that they need it. But they have difficulty in *believing* in forgiveness. The spark of forgiveness which results in fellowship does not leap over in this case either. Here the tension is great enough, but the poles are too far removed from one another. What the first of these groups is concerned with is love, the love of God and the love of their neighbours. The second group is most concerned with justice.

The Christian doctrine of forgiveness

It is characteristic of the Christian doctrine of forgiveness that it includes fully both love and justice, without lessening either of them. The Cross of Jesus is the perfect unification of justice and love. Such was the price of forgiveness, so absolute is God's righteous judgment over sin, that the son of man had to suffer all this. But so boundless also is His love that He sent His own son to bear it. It is only we who in our thinking separate the righteousness and the love of God. They are really one, and exactly this unity expresses the will of God to save and to restore fallen man, and have fellowship with him. This is the mystery of reconciliation, that here righteousness and love are perfectly expressed, without lessening either of them. And therefore forgiveness through Jesus Christ is full and true forgiveness. God is both faithful and just when He forgives us (I John 1 : 9).

Where the Cross is not a reality, it is only too easy to fall into one of two errors. Love is perverted into sentimentality, or justice ends in brutality. Our generation, however, has also witnessed sentimentality and brutality going very well together.

This is all clearly exemplified in a story from the life of Jesus. He was offered the choice between the two purely human possibilities of brutality and sentimentality, but he chose a third way. They brought to him a woman taken in adultery, and watched him anxiously whether he would follow the severe words of the Law and declare that she should be stoned, or whether he would be the mild teacher, excusing what had happened and not taking the sin seriously. He found a third way, Christian forgiveness. Surely the woman felt that none of those who stood there with stones ready in their hands, sentenced her so severely as Jesus did, when he stooped down and wrote on the ground. But surely she also knew that not even he who tried most readily to excuse her had a deeper sympathy for her than this man who said: "Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more" (John 8: 1-11). Jesus condemned her sin, but he gave her a new chance in raising her up by his love. He pointed to the human solidarity in which she stood: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her"; but above all: he spoke the word of forgiveness to her — that is, he took her up into fellowship.

For this is exactly the core of forgiveness. Real forgiveness always restores broken fellowship, as superficial forgiveness never does. Even the fine word "*tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner*", indicating the climax of purely human forgiveness, does not create fellowship, but distance. It is the distance between him who understands, and him who is understood, between him who tolerates, and him who is tolerated, between him who is righteous and him who is not. But about Jesus it is said: "He had made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin" (II Cor. 5: 21). Therefore the New Testament talks about forgiveness in terms of a 'right' which we have been given, the right to call ourselves the children of God. We have received the spirit of adoption (Rom. 8: 15), and the power to become the sons of God (John 1: 12). He who has really been forgiven is

not without rights, he is not at the mercy of him who forgives, but from him has received the right not only to be protected against further enmity, but also to be taken up into fellowship with him. Forgiveness therefore is a new start, a new birth. "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Cor. 5: 17).

The collective aspect of forgiveness

The forgiveness of God is not something purely individual. As God forgives us our trespasses, we are supposed to forgive them that trespass against us. If we do not do so, it is a sign that our hearts have not really opened up to God's forgiveness, and so we also check the stream of forgiveness towards ourselves, as Jesus has pointed out so clearly in the parable of the wicked fellow-servant (Mat. 18: 23). A forgiving attitude towards men is a necessary and inevitable consequence of receiving the forgiveness of God. A bitter and irreconcilable heart is in itself a proof that one does not know the forgiveness of God. In this way God's forgiveness becomes a reality in society. But the Bible talks of the collective aspects of forgiveness also in another way. As God can forgive an individual his sins, so He can also forgive a nation its sins. In the Old Testament we often hear that the people sinned and repented, and that God forgave the people of Israel (frequently, for instance, in the book of Judges). In the New Testament we find the same thought, but now applied to the new Israel, the Church. The Church can sin, repent and be forgiven. We can see this in the Book of Revelation, chapters one to three.

Reconciliation in Christ is *total*, it does not concern God and the soul only, but God's relation to His whole creation. It even concerns our internal, human relations. When it is said that he has "broken down the middle wall of partition between us" (Ephes. 2: 14), does that not mean that he has laid down the objective foundation for real reconciliation between individuals and nations?

The urgency of forgiveness today

What has here been said is today not only a religious doctrine, but a political necessity. With considerable justification it could be said that in spite of all Hitler had won this war, in as much as his spirit is victorious in the minds of so many. The injustice which has been committed is so great that a purely human forgiveness has proved to be insufficient. Even secularized humanists, who according to their principles should hold that sin and crime are fundamentally a sickness of society originating in social conditions, have in the formerly occupied countries had nothing to put up against naked hatred and the spirit of revenge, but have themselves yielded to it. And even if the period of capitulation and liberation in many ways turned out better than might have been feared, we see that today the armoured column of hatred is rolling on, threatening to kill new millions, instead of their being raised by the power of reconciliation. The Churches stand, for the most part, powerless and silent.

To take the German nation up again into the fellowship of nations is today both a Christian task and a political necessity. To postpone it is not only wrong but also foolish. Their isolation must be broken, the iron ring of hatred must be melted down. We may talk about the enormous difficulties with which we are faced in the military and economic sphere. One thing however, is certain, that human and cultural isolation can and must be broken. And it is the clear duty of the Churches to be the pioneers, as they have been to a certain extent already. But much is still undone, and it is urgent. German youth must get a chance to meet youth from other parts of the world for discussion and cooperation, and to re-establish fellowship.

But is it not necessary, some will say, that justice shall speak first and only then love? Is it not too early to talk about forgiveness and renewal of fellowship? Must not justice have a clear field first? But the

Christian knows that in his faith justice and love are one, not only in matter, but *even in time*. We must not minimise justice. The guilty must be found and sentenced and punished. Human and divine justice is never abolished. A just settlement is a part of all reconciliation and all fellowship, and the struggle for justice never ends. (It is our task, however, today to see that this justice is given a chance to deal with both sides. Or will there always be war-criminals only on the defeated side?) But love must work *at the same time* as justice. And love is inventive. It can always *pray*, and prayer enables it to find its way into separated zones and through closed prison doors, because love wills fellowship and has no time to wait.

Love must take the initiative

It cannot even wait for repentance. God loves us before we repent, and He "justifieth the ungodly" (Rom. 4: 5). Certainly the love of God does not get its chance, does not penetrate until the sinner repents. The closed heart shuts out love, and thereby reconciliation is not made completely effective. But we must never forget that God does not love us *because* we repent. On the contrary, His love contributes to create repentance in our heart. And, in the same way, if the Christian has conceived the depth of the reconciliation in Christ, he will already in advance have the forgiving heart, and with the inventiveness of love he will search for an opening, through which forgiveness may enter and establish fellowship.

When it comes to our relationship with Germany, an opening has already been given us through the declaration of guilt by the German church leaders and the answers which they have called forth from the churches of other nations. It does not matter very much whether the rank and file can always follow their leaders; in any case an opening has been made, sufficient for love to make its way through and start the work of reconciliation for which it yearns.

Love does not come as the rich man comes to the poor to give alms. Primarily that is because it knows that we live in a world of mutual guilt. Legally we have no responsibility for the horrors of the concentration camps. But he who would keep himself clean from all the injustice which has ridden the world, both before and since this last war, would have to withdraw from humanity. We all need forgiveness from God and from men. We all need the new birth which comes from forgiveness, if the deadly determinism of sin is not to lead us into new horrors.

But this forgiveness God has introduced into the world, not as an alms, but as a right, won for man by His own Son. To be given alms humiliates man, to be forgiven raises him up. Forgiveness gives him something on which to build, for the future and for eternity. And it is this renewing forgiveness which is the only possible basis for Christian work today. Alms is an emergency solution, forgiveness is daily bread. And for this the hungering millions of Europe are waiting.

Forgiving one Another

J. E. L. NEWBIGIN

"The Federation is conscious that, for many students in our movements, meeting and collaboration with members of former enemy nations is not to be taken easily, or as a matter of course. It is only through the forgiveness of God, which calls us at the same time to mutual forgiveness, that the wonderful gift of a completely new beginning and true fellowship is bestowed." The present article is a kind of meditation on these words from the Resolution of the General Committee

last year. I am not equipped by personal experience to speak of the special situation from which that resolution comes, with its terrible depth of bitterness. If I have learned anything which justifies what follows, it has been from experience as a British missionary in India during these last seven years. This has meant, firstly, living all the time under the pressure of those feelings of suspicion, resentment and exasperation which divide Britain and India. That pressure exerts itself upon every personal relationship, and upon the whole common life of the Church in so far as British and Indians share in it, and it is not possible to found a fellowship except upon a deeply-grounded experience of the forgiveness of God. It has meant, secondly, sharing in the work of Church courts, where issues of ecclesiastical discipline have to be settled, and where one sees a young Church, set in the close-knit community life of a pagan village, seeking to find and embody in its life both the purity and the peace of Christ ; seeking also not merely to find in theory, but to apply in daily practice, the secret of a Christian discipline which ministers to men the forgiveness of God, and yet asserts and establishes the Christian ethical standards. Both these experiences force one back to the place where alone we can truly forgive one another — the place where we are ourselves forgiven by God.

How we evade forgiveness

It is helpful, I think, to remind ourselves that the way of life which we share today enables and encourages us to evade the whole problem of forgiveness to an unprecedented degree. There is no need to repeat at length the story of the de-personalising of our common life. In a primitive village community the greater part of life is concerned with persons whom one knows as persons — the landowner, the shopkeeper, the magistrate, the neighbour. One must live with these people — as friends or as enemies. One cannot escape from their

society to the companionship of selected friends. Failure is immediately and simply revealed in gossip, factions, open quarrels. In our complex life, with its large-scale organisation, division of labour, cheap and rapid transport, most of our economic and political relationships are with people we never meet. The people with whom we deal in business are likely to be quite different from the friends to whom we turn in our hours of leisure. Instead of a few relationships, each of them engaging a relatively large part of our total time and interest, we have a very large number of relationships, each engaging a small fraction of our attention. The factors, whose interplay makes up the story of our life, thus become impersonal concretions of power — not fully responsible persons. The sense of responsibility for our share in events is difficult to maintain when our share is so infinitesimally small, and yet without the sense of responsibility there can be neither the sense of guilt nor the experience of forgiveness.

It is perhaps a consequence of this manner of life that our theology has failed to come to grips adequately with the problem of forgiveness. I do not wish to indulge in the profitless exercise of belabouring liberal theology, but I think it falls to be said at this point that the central failure of liberalism was, and is, its failure to understand the New Testament doctrine of the atonement, and that this failure was perhaps the reflection of just this characteristic of the civilisation in which liberalism was cradled — that it encourages us to evade the real problem of forgiveness.

A new standing-ground

Dr. Vincent Taylor has pointed out that the modern use of the word 'forgiveness' by Christian writers covers the three ideas which are distinguished in the New Testament as 'forgiveness' (in the sense of remission), 'justification', and 'reconciliation'. He urges the importance of a careful consideration of these three distinct

ideas if we are to understand the message of the New Testament. Forgiveness, in the New Testament sense, is simply the remission of sin, the cancelling of a debt, the removing of something which stands between God and the sinner. Reconciliation is that act by which God's relation to the sinner and the sinner's relation to God is changed from enmity to harmony. Between the two stands the term which is most characteristic of the Bible and most strange to us — 'justification'. Justification is the act by which God gives to man the standing before Him upon the basis of which alone reconciliation between man and a righteous God is possible. If there is to be harmony between man and God, then man must in some sense be righteous. In what sense? It is that question that is the heart of the problem of forgiveness — of God's forgiveness of us, and of our forgiveness of each other. How can we be reconciled with those who have committed great evil unless either we consent to their evil by condoning it, or they in some sense cease to be evil? What is the common standing-ground upon which we can truly and lastingly be reconciled? When, as so often, we simply condone the wrongs that others commit, and let them go their own way, we commit the greatest sin against them of which we are capable. As I have already said, our whole way of life encourages this kind of irresponsibility but it is the total negation of our membership one of another in the Body of Christ. The only standing-ground we know is that which God has given us by the death of Christ on the Cross for us. Our justification is the gracious act of God, and it is that justification which alone delivers us from the necessity of justifying ourselves before one another and provides the standing-ground upon which we may meet as brothers.

This may be a matter of dry theology, but it may also be a matter of living personal faith. Let me try to put it in terms of personal faith. This phrase 'standing-ground' is one that I find myself using constantly. One must have some firm ground somewhere, something

about which one is sure amid the infinite and unpredictable hazards of encounter with people and situations. One's tendency is to seek it in oneself, and to reinforce the constantly threatened sense of security by contact with others of one's own type — one's own party or race. That becomes very clear in the attitude that so easily develops among a minority of Europeans in a foreign country. Every occasion on which that confidence is threatened by criticism, or by actual attack, drives the threatened person further into the group, within which he can recover his confidence by contact with those who share his feelings about the difference between 'us' and 'them'. This difference becomes more and more accentuated by each occasion in which a clash occurs, until each group comes to see itself as the bearer of standards or principles which are threatened by those of the other. Real personal meeting becomes almost impossible, except on a superficial level. Quite certainly each of the groups can justly point to sins which the other has committed — perhaps very terrible sins, to sinful propensities which are still present in the other group, to evil customs, low standards of conduct, and so on, all of which seem to justify the group in its own eyes. There is no basis upon which the members of one group can go out to meet the other except by abandoning that which gives the group its cohesion and security. The group may be a great nation, or a party, or a small faction in a local community, or two or three people mutually encouraging one another about personal grievances. There is no possibility of reconciliation except upon the basis of a new standing-ground, a new security — which is yet not merely another form of mutual self-justification.

It is this new standing-ground that is given in Christ. Here in this tremendous event of the Cross I find the one absolutely certain thing upon which all else is to be built. Here is the place where I am caught, humbled to the dust, and raised up, the place where I am allowed to stand secure in the possession of a relationship with

God which is wholly His gift. I am humbled to the dust because, having seen the Cross, I know that in common with all mankind my relationship with God is that I am a traitor to His love and a rebel against His Kingship. I cannot any longer rest my confidence upon what I am, nor upon what I hope some day to be, nor upon the ideals I share with others, nor upon any created thing. I find every such confidence finally and for ever discredited. I am raised up again simply because I see in the Cross that the Son of God loved me, and gave himself for me, knowing full well what I am. I am given a new standing-ground, and a new relation with God. As I give myself to Christ in believing response to this tremendous act of His grace towards me, I am a sharer in His mind towards God and towards my own sin. That same sacrifice of His which binds me to Him burns up all possibility of confidence in myself. I have a righteousness which is of God by faith, a relationship of utter dependence upon God's grace which is at the same time the negation of my sinful self. I know that I am speaking of something not yet attained as far as my appropriation of it is concerned, but it is something finally and completely done as far as God's promise of it is concerned. And therefore, each day's sin and failure drives me back again to this mercy-seat, each day's wandering into the swamps of self-reliance sends me stumbling back to this unshakable rock that Christ died for me. Here alone is given the place where I can stand.

A standing-ground which is shared

But I cannot accept this standing-ground for myself without acknowledging that God has provided it equally for my neighbour, my colleague, my opponent, my enemy. Just as there is no sin of mine, no long-hidden treason of my deepest will which is not included in the treason of Calvary, so there is no sin of my enemy which is not likewise included; and, as in my own case where sin did abound, there grace did yet more abound, so

also with my enemy. He stands just where I do — even though he may not acknowledge it. He is a sinner against God as I am, and he is the object of God's grace as I am, and it is the very explicit and constant teaching of our Lord Himself that I cannot be forgiven except as I forgive my enemy. That is to say, in so far as I seek to exclude my enemy from that standing-ground which God has given in Christ, I inexorably exclude myself. I cannot make it the foundation of my life that Christ died for me, and at the same time deny that He died for my enemy. And if He died for my enemy, that fact must necessarily be the foundation of all my dealing with him.

Christ died for my enemy. What obligation does that lay on me? Fundamentally the obligation to help that enemy to see that that is so. Clearly I cannot do that except in the measure that I myself live steadily in that perception. Or rather — and here we must stop speaking in the first person singular — the Church will be able to do so in the measure that its fellowship is founded upon and governed by the atonement wrought for men in Christ. The discharge of that obligation will include ministries both of love and of wrath. God has given authority of distinct kinds both to the political power (the State) and to the Church, each of which has its place in ministering to this end, though only within the context of a whole understanding of what that end is. It is in the nature of the case impossible to state in advance what is to be done in each situation. The man who finds his own confidence in the redemption wrought in Christ will meet every situation with a sensitiveness to the mind of others, and a readiness to love and to suffer, which are born of the gift of God's love to him. What is absolutely ruled out for him is the attitude that writes any man off as hopeless, and so blasphemously arrogates to man the dread power of final judgment which belongs to God alone.

Nothing so much corrupts and destroys the Church as the sense among its members of uncanceled debts.

Sometimes they are vast debts, sometimes incredibly trivial. What we have to assert with absolute certainty is that they have all been cancelled. Christ has taken them all upon Himself without remainder. If we carry part of them still upon our minds we make His death of no effect. The only thing that stands in the way of our mutual fellowship is the spirit that will not accept the cancellation on Christ's terms, that will not abandon some precarious little island of corporate or private pride for the rock that He has provided for us all.

Nothing on the other hand more movingly and vividly reveals the power of Christ than the spectacle of a Christian congregation set amid fearful stresses of group suspicion, fear and pride, learning to forgive one another for Christ's sake. I think of long drawn-out sessions of village *panchayats* when the elders of the Church brought together individuals deeply divided by the kind of quarrels that a small village community knows so well, and, after patiently drawing out one by one the long-stored armoury of grievances with which each had fortified himself against the approach of the other, resolutely cast them into the flames of Christ's consuming love. I think of the tense hush of the Lord's Supper in such a setting, when men and women must receive from one another's hands the bread and wine of fellowship or else confess themselves cut off from the fellowship of the Lord.

"It is only through the forgiveness of God which calls us at the same time to mutual forgiveness, that the wonderful gift of a completely new beginning and true fellowship is bestowed."

The Forgiveness of God and the Forgiveness of Men

GEORGES SERIKOFF

Of this problem of forgiveness there is at least one side clear and unquestionable : if a sinner repents God forgives him, therefore we too must forgive our brethren all their sins against us. "If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him ; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee saying, I repent ; thou shalt forgive him" (Lk. 17 : 3-4).

The parable of the Prodigal Son speaks to us about forgiveness as the consequence of repentance. "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee. And am no more worthy to be called thy son" (Lk. 15 : 18). And as an answer to that his father "had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him" (Lk. 15 : 20). "Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Lk. 15 : 10). An example of this is the story of the repentance and forgiveness of the King Manasseh, and how he, after being led in chains into captivity in Babylon "... when he was in affliction... besought the Lord his God... and prayed unto him" (II Chron. 33 : 12-13). Better known still is the example of the repentance and forgiveness of King David who after committing his sin confessed himself to Nathan "I have sinned against the Lord". And Nathan said unto David, "The Lord also hath put away thy sin ; thou shalt not die" (II Sam. 12 : 13).

There is no need for us to remind ourselves now of

the well-known examples of the repentant sinners forgiven by Christ: Peter, and the thief on the Cross. Knowing how God forgives the repentant sinner we must in the same way forgive him. Indeed it is impossible not to forgive those who repent because through repentance they save themselves and are renewed (*metanoia* = repentance, renewal) and enter into the Kingdom of God¹. Not to forgive a man who enters in would mean the non-acceptance of the Kingdom of God.

Forgiving the collective sinner

We must forgive not only those who personally sin against us but also as it were a collective sinner. The citizens of Nineveh repented and God forgave them. "And should I not spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons..." (Jonah 3 and 4: 11). We often meet in the Bible names that represent a collectivity of people, e.g. Israel, meaning the people of Israel²; or Judah, meaning the whole tribe of Judah³; Babylon, instead of the Kingdom of Babylon (Jer. 50: 23). To those collectivities were sometimes addressed words of God about punishment, and forgiveness, about joy and so on (Num. 24: 5; Hos. 10; Is. 13: 9 ff.). To them also were addressed words of reproach because of a sin, or a call to repentance or promise of forgiveness and joy⁴. Daniel (9: 7) prays in the name of Israel saying, "... we have sinned against Thee" (9: 8), "... all Israel have transgressed Thy law" (9: 11), "O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do..." (9: 19).

In the Book of Revelation our Lord addressing the seven churches speaks to the angels that represent them, "Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write:

¹ "... except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish (Lk. 13: 3)."

² Cf. Gen. 47: 27; Exod. 17: 11; 32: 4; 34: 27 and elsewhere.

³ Judges 10: 9; I Kings 14: 22.

⁴ Num. 25: 3 (Ps. 24: 27); 78: 59 (129: 7); 149: 2 (Jer. 50: 19).

... repent, and do the first works..." (Rev. 2 : 1-7), "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write : ... repent ; or else I will come unto thee quickly and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth" (Rev. 2 : 12-17 ; 3 : 14-22).

If such a collective person is capable of sorrowing, of rejoicing, of hardening himself of blindness (Rom. 11 : 25), he is capable also of attaining a state of righteousness (Rom. 9 : 31) and even of being saved (Rom. 11 : 26) ; if he can repent and be forgiven, then there is nothing to prevent his also forgiving other collective persons. An example of forgiveness shown to a collective debtor may be seen in the Parable of the Debtor (Mat. 18 : 23-35) who owed to his King ten thousand talents. This is such an enormous sum of money that one can safely assume that this debtor was a collective person, a nation or a state¹. Could we not therefore say that not only individual persons must forgive each other, but perhaps nations may be able to forgive each other as well ?

On what is based our forgiveness of other people's sins against us ? On our forgetfulness of these sins ? On the possibility of their being wiped out of our memory ? Unfortunately the consequences of a sin are very often of such a character that it is impossible to forget the sin itself. How can we forget the loss of someone dear to us and how can we forget those who caused this loss ? How can a loving and faithful husband or wife forget their broken happiness ? Is it possible to forgive truly and sincerely the person responsible for our sorrow and yet be inconsolable ? Will not our sorrow constantly cry out for vengeance and retribution ? Can one be at peace where there is lack of balance, loss, or disharmony ?

We can forgive a person who has sinned against us because in reality every sin is in the last resort a sin against God and not against man. God is the Creator

¹ To show how large this debt was it will suffice to say that according to Joseph Flavius the two provinces of Galilee and Perea payed only two hundred talents as their annual tribute.

of everything, He is the real Master and Owner of everything and everyone in this world. Such is the meaning of the Parable of the Unjust Steward (Lk. 16) if one accepts the explanation of it given by Fr. Paul Florensky in his book *Pillar and Affirmation of the Truth*, p. 423-426 (in Russian). The debts that the steward so unjustly remits are the sins of our brethren. When we forgive them their trespasses we act from the point of view of this world, unjustly, for what right have we to remit the offences that were in reality done not against us but against God? But indeed this same injustice "the Lord hath commended". Only by seeing the sins of our brethren as debts towards our Lord, not towards us, can we forgive them truly and sincerely; only by understanding that we are not money-lenders but only stewards, that it is in reality our Lord and not we who are offended by those sins, only then we shall be able to look upon this unfortunate brother as our friend (in Russian "friend" lit. means *alter ego*).

Only God is capable of forgiving

The true sufferer from the sins of mankind is our Lord Jesus Christ — the suffering Messiah "who has taken the sins of the world" and has suffered mostly not from the nail wounds but from the sins He took upon Himself to expiate them, i.e. to submerge them in His Divine Love.

Only God, the Divine Love, is capable of forgiving, but we also can do it inasmuch as we are His "image and likeness", for in the natural world man lives with man like a wild beast and there can be no question of forgiveness. In this natural world one may forget an offence, one may cover up one's wound, and one may sometimes make peace with an offender for interest's sake, but there is no real forgiveness. "An eye for an eye" is the natural law¹ of this world that lies in sin.

¹ Historically speaking it represents progress to some extent if we compare it with the law of vengeance until the fourth generation.

Soloviev said once that what distinguishes man from an animal is the feeling of shame. But man even more distinguishes himself from the animal world by his capacity to forgive. Indeed only because of this spiritual principle in us are we capable of seeing Who is the real object of all offences and all sorrows, before Whom all sinners and culprits are really guilty. All our griefs and discontents come from the lack of spirituality in us. We take upon us all the debts of our brethren and we get angry, sorrowful and indignant. We grieve that when we were hungry nobody fed us, that when we were thirsty nobody gave us drink. We feel offended because when we were in exile nobody wanted to receive us, or when we were naked we were not clothed. Oh ! if we could only see Who it was that, together with us and even instead of us, was thus neglected and injured, Who was in exile, in need, in sickness or in prison (Mat. 25 : 31-45), we should not feel so angry for ourselves, we should remain calm, meek and unperturbed.

“To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence” (Deut. 32 : 35) was said in the Old Testament ; but in the New Testament this idea was even more clarified : “Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren ye have done it unto me”. That is why in the Orthodox Church, when a man who is going to make his confession to a priest comes first to his brethren and asks their forgiveness, he is never forgiven in the name of those to whom he has spoken but the answer he would usually get is : “May our Lord forgive you”. Or when in the course of ordinary life someone excuses himself, the answer he usually gets is : “Do not speak about this to me, God be with thee”, thus indicating Who is the real Master and Judge. And so our forgiveness of our brethren is possible and truly sincere only if we admit that our brother is guilty not before us, but before God, for we are beggars and there is nothing that one could steal from us. We have nothing that really belongs to us, everything is from Him, we are “servants of the Lord”

in the most direct sense of this word, and our "sonship" to Him (Mat. 6 : 9) and our "friendship" with God (Mat. 22 : 12 ; 26 : 50 ; Lk. 12 : 4 ; John 15 : 14) do not abolish our "servantship" and our nothingness as creatures before their Creator.

Nothing can offend us, we rejoice always in everything, we seek nothing of our own, everything we have is our Lord's. We are blessed, we rejoice when non-Christians would weep, we rejoice when we are persecuted for righteousness' sake, we are exceedingly glad when men persecute us and say all manner of evil against us for Christ's sake. And as we do not belong to ourselves, we have therefore no property and what we have and love is not ours. Our own body is a temple of the Holy Ghost and, if someone tortures and defiles it, it is clear Whom he is defiling !

The mystery of God's forgiveness

Now we shall consider the mystery of God's forgiveness of the sins of which we repent. This mystery is the mystery of God's Love in which all our sins are washed away. Our sins are one drop in the ocean of God's mercy, as a saint said once. This Love forgives everything and suffers long (I Cor. 13 : 4) and there is no sin that God's Love could not forgive to a repentant man. One of the deeds of the all-embracing Love of God shown towards mankind was the Incarnation of the Son of God, and subsequently the sacrifice on Calvary wrought for all of us, which once and for all made all who accept it (i.e. and who repent), holy and perfect. "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb. 10 : 14). By the divine power of this Crucified Love the sins of a repentant sinner are forgiven at the sacrament of confession. The sacrament is wrought by pronouncing Christ's name and making a sign of the cross over the head of the penitent (see Sacrament of Confession in the Orthodox Order of Sacraments and Sacramentation). The sins are remitted,

undone, atoned for, and man is reconciled with God. Through the power of the same Divine Crucified Love which was imparted to us at our creation, since we were created in His "image and likeness" we are capable of "forgiving them that trespass against us".

But let us not think, when we say the Lord's prayer, that God will forgive our sins only if we forgive the sins of our brethren, or that God's forgiveness is conditioned by ours. (As though the quantity of our mercy can ever be compared with that of God and as though He needs our example.) Let us not have such an impious thought, let us rather believe and hope that God will forgive us even when we have not forgiven them that trespass against us!

Moreover it is very important to make a distinction between "forgiveness for" and "forgiveness because of". We must forgive not in order to be forgiven by our Lord, but *because* we were forgiven and saved by His Crucified Love. Our forgiveness of those who have sinned against us is the consequence of God's forgiveness of us. Our Lord's words which immediately follow His prayer "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you : but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Mat. 6 : 14-15) merely indicate that there exists an ontological connection between our love and the Divine Love — the same connection as exists between the sun and its rays ; if it ever happens that there are no more sun's rays in this world it will mean that the sun has grown dim. Therefore the meaning of the phrase in the Lord's prayer about our debts and our debtors is *the same* as in the above parable of the servant who owed his king ten thousand talents (Mat. 18 : 23). "Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?" (Mat. 18 : 33), i.e. our love and our mercy are a reflection and an echo of the Divine Love. We can love and can forgive only because of the (ontologically) divine basis of our nature ; we forgive our debtors *as* our Father

forgives us our debts. "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things" (Rom. 11 : 36).

It must also be said that mercy and love towards our brethren are not laid upon us as a commandment with an imperative meaning, but rather as a testament, a reminder, or a testimony. The "New Commandment" given to us by Christ is not a new morality, but it is Christ Himself and His sacrifice upon the Cross. We love not because we *must* love but because we cannot *not* love, since God is perfect Love. We forgive not because we must forgive, but because we cannot do otherwise since God is all-forgiveness. Our morality is directly connected with dogmatics. Out of *what* God is and *what* we know about Him comes that *which* we are — created according to His image — that which we carry in ourselves and which we try to be. That is why we must not think that in the teaching about God's nature, about the creation of this world, about its salvation and final destiny there is something abstract. Out of our knowledge of what God is comes our notion of what our likeness to Him must be.

Likewise our morality depends very much on our understanding of what the final destiny of the world is, what the last Judgment, Hell, and its torments are going to be. And if we think of God only as a Just Judge we shall scarcely attain the idea of His forgiveness of all at the end of time. But if God is Love, Who at the end "might have mercy upon all" (Rom. 11 : 32) and if the final aim of creation was "that God may be all in all" (I Cor. 15 : 28), then the idea of the just Judgment, just retribution, and all the reckoning and the torment, these will all take on another meaning, not that of the last values (*ta eschata*) but of the last but one. And beyond that something else remains.

Peace Through Forgiveness

**From a sermon preached at Frankfort-on-the-Main
on the First Sunday in Advent, 1945**

MARTIN NIEMÖLLER

"And I will encamp about mine house because of the army, because of him that passeth by, and because of him that returneth : and no oppressor shall pass through them any more : for now have I seen with mine eyes.

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion ; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem : behold, thy King cometh unto thee : he is just, and having salvation ; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.

"And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off : and he shall speak peace unto the heathen : and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.

"As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water.

"Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope : even to-day do I declare that I will render double unto thee."

(Zechariah 9 : 8-12.)

"Rejoice greatly... shout... he shall speak peace... I have sent forth thy prisoners... hope... even today..." Can such words apply to us ? Can we still hear them — I mean not only with our ears but with our hearts — in such a way that we somehow enter into their message and let ourselves be gripped by it, so that we really begin to take hope again, to "thaw inwardly", to feel once more something approaching joy ?

Can peace really come ?

... It is God Who has spoken the word which we have just read, and if we would escape the devil who once again "as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" we shall do well to listen to what God wants to say to us. All the more — since it concerns those very questions which disturb and torment us today — how can peace really come, how can we put an end to this eternal slaughter, violence, hatred and jealousy, how can we men learn to live, not *against* each other, but, once for all, *with* each other and *for* each other? "God doesn't worry about you". This is what the Tempter whispers and he points out to us that the whole history of mankind has been nothing but a history of wars, a succession of catastrophes similar to that which we are living through today. "Do you still want to believe in the fairy tale of God? Do you still want to wait for God and His help? If there is a God at all He is certainly not the God of love about whom you dream; for how can such a God be reconciled with the fact that you are for ever falling from one calamity into another, and that this God has brought upon you one massacre of your people after the other?"

This is what the Tempter says today. But yesterday he spoke differently — "Do you want always to be slaves and let yourselves be enslaved by others? Don't believe the parsons when they tell you that war is a calamity and a punishment, the visitation and scourge of God. War is for us the great test of our strength as a people and of our national willingness for sacrifice!" The Tempter lies today as he lied yesterday, for he is, and remains, the father of all lies.

No, God does not want war. His commandment stands before us who know His Word, clear and unequivocal, "Thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, nor his wife, nor his manservant, nor

his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbour's". And the Lord Jesus Christ has interpreted God's commandment for us: he who is angry with his brother is already guilty of the law, but the peacemakers are blessed. Whoever holds God responsible for war either does not know God's Word or does not want to know it! Of course it is another question whether we Christians do not bear a large measure of guilt for the incessant wars of history, and from that question we cannot easily escape. It has been pointed out with justice that right up to the present day the Church has seldom found the word by which to declare clearly that war is not a means permitted or approved by God, however worthy and justifiable the goal. And it can equally be recalled that for centuries Christian churches have repeatedly invoked God's blessing on warfare, armies and weapons, and in a most un-Christian manner have prayed for the destruction of the enemy. All this is our guilt and the guilt of our fathers — but most certainly it is God's. And especially we Christians of today must stand ashamed in the presence of a so-called sect, like the earnest "Bible-Christians" (*Bibelforscher*), who went in their hundreds and thousands to the concentration camps and to death because they rejected military service and refused to shoot other men. Here, as in much else, it should be clear to us that it is precisely we, the Church and the Christians, who are today called to repentance and to a change of mind, if we want to go on proclaiming God's Word and representing His cause — so it is in part our responsibility that men are now undertaking to build without God that peace for which all mankind craves.

Our peace and God's peace

For the longing for peace remains and cannot be uprooted; the whole world is waiting for someone to come and bring its fulfilment. It is so after every great war, it is so today. It is especially so amongst us who

have thirty years of suffering behind us — and who knows how many still before us ? How shall we come — at last — to rest, to peace, to fellowship ? All human programmes for peace, however, suffer from one basic defect. In the last resort we know of no better solution than to hinder violence by violence and to meet force by still stronger force. We are very thankful if in this way we can succeed in at least limiting the scope of the evil and keeping it within reasonable bounds ; but we should never imagine that it is a way that will bring about any fundamental change. For the real evil is that each wants to succeed at the expense of the other. Not to see this is to be blind. Our life today is unbearably hard and joyless, not so much because of all our everyday difficulties great and small, but far more because envy and lack of love have penetrated everywhere and poison our common life. And still we hope for a lasting peace and an enduring change for the better ! We live in a time when a great deal is spoken and written about love, but which *has* no love.

God wills peace. But for this He needs men other than we are. The commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour" still does not make us different, and therefore all God's promises in the Old Testament have as their aim and goal that God will write His law of love in our hearts and that love will become a reality, the reality that rules our lives. The fulfilment of this promise is announced by the Angels' Song at Christmas: "On earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased". Without God there can be no love, no fellowship, and therefore no peace: "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked". This is the joyful message that is given to all the world and that we have to proclaim to all the world: "Not only have ~~we~~ had enough of hatred, enmity, bloodshed and slaughter — that says and accomplishes little — but God has had enough, and long ago far more than enough. God's will is that things should be changed and He himself should bring about what our strength can never do.

"I will encamp about mine house because of the army... for now have I seen with mine eyes". We think it must be easy for God to "cut off the battle bow" and to "speak peace"; He need only give His word of command: "For he spake, and it was done; he commanded and it stood fast". But God does not work in that way. It does not concern Him that the world should function smoothly and that men should submit themselves, though unwillingly, to His word of command. But it does concern Him that we men should be made whole inwardly and that then we should set about, ourselves, bringing order into our common life in this world. God goes to the root of the evil; He wants new men.

So He promises us His Prince of Peace, who in every respect is the exact opposite of an earthly ruler. And we know Him, in whom this promise has taken form: Jesus Christ. His kingdom is not of this world, for His rule begins in men's hearts and souls and knows no force: "Behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass".

No peace without justice and forgiveness

There can be no enduring peace and no genuine understanding among men without justice; if we are to find the way to each other the injustice that comes between us and separates us must be brought to light. This is the first thing that Jesus does for us. He is the last and greatest prophet of God, who in all His teaching and especially in the Sermon on the Mount puts before us the Commandment of God in all its holiness. And, what is more, He Himself in His own person, is the incarnation of God's holy will. "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me". Here as nowhere else our conscience is awakened; here we recognise our own sin so clearly and acutely that we lose all desire to reproach others

for their sins ; here we become aware that the repentance and change of mind which Jesus demands must begin first of all with ourselves. And the first barrier that separates us from our brother disappears ; we cease to shift the question of guilt hither and thither as if in every case the other man must first recognise and admit his wrong before we can approach each other. Jesus is the Just One and before Him we confess our guilt.

But — and this is the second thing Jesus does — He does not condemn us for our guilt. For He is not only the Just One who, as such, has the right to pass judgment upon us ; He who sees all the depth of our guilt comes to us as a Helper and Saviour with the word of forgiveness, “Thy sins are forgiven thee”, the greatest word that ever came from His lips. And here also He does not stop short at words. He completes and seals His mission with His death upon the Cross. “For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins”. And here the second barrier standing in the way of peace and understanding among men disappears. There can be no peace without forgiveness. That applies to the life of nations no less than to the simple common place relationships of our daily life with our family and friends. And he who lives by forgiveness must and can forgive. Thus we are shown the way to peace on earth. It is the way of Righteousness and Forgiveness ; and for that reason the Prince of Peace comes as a Righteous One and as a Helper. His gifts are repentance and grace ; He is neither a judge nor a reformer, He compels no one to submit to His will and makes no claim to earthly power, “lowly and riding upon an ass”.

God's way of making peace

So Jesus came to Jerusalem, the man who had nowhere to lay His head, the man who was left in the lurch by all His friends when things became serious

Yes, He was poor, He had nothing except what God had given Him — and in men's eyes that is not much. Jesus ushered in no golden age, as did His contemporary Augustus Caesar. But He brought the love of God into the world; He preached it, He lived it, and by His death He bore witness to it — and from that time the world has become something different. We men have no longer a good conscience if we live without love, for we now stand under a new commandment. It sounds exactly like the old one, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself!" and yet it is new. For it is no longer a commandment that comes to us from outside, "Thou shalt, or woe betide thee!" It is far rather a gift of this "poor" man who says, "I bring you the forgiveness and the love of God — now live without love, if you can!" We cannot; that is the witness of Christendom. "For the love of Christ constraineth us". Whoever belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ cannot live without love, and if we are living without love, it is a sure sign that we have already fallen away from Him.

This is God's way of making peace and overcoming the disorder in the depths of our human hearts, so that there is simply no room left for our selfishness and self-righteousness, those perpetual springs of dissension, envy, hate and strife. We are freed from the prison in which we have shut ourselves up and out of which we cannot by ourselves escape, freed by the blood of the New Covenant, freed by the sacrifice that the Righteous One and the Helper made for us, the unrighteous and the helpless. And herein is the stronghold in which we may and must take refuge... "Turn you to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope".

It is the people of God — all Christians — who are addressed. In them God's work will begin, in them will be realised the peace which Christ created in judgment and grace, with His call to repentance and word of forgiveness.

This peace begins as the peace of the individual

heart that knows God's love, but it does not remain as something for itself alone. It becomes the Christian brotherhood of the community of Christ, and like a stream it must ever go on widening its course: "His dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth." When, as today, mankind is searching for peace a great hour has struck for the Christian Church; we stand before a great opportunity and at the same time before great temptations. What significance the Church in Germany might have today, if it declared itself in full agreement with the aims and purposes of the occupying powers and in this way succeeded in gaining an influence in education and public opinion such as it has not had for perhaps centuries! Or again, what significance it could have if it made itself the spokesman of the wishes and complaints of the German people and won the love and affection of all honest, decent Germans! On all sides the cry is raised, "Build up now a strong, influential Church that can seize its opportunities". Such ideas and proposals are often put forward in entirely good faith. But — a powerful Church? We are still thinking of God and His work in human terms. We have it in our flesh and blood!

But here is not a question of flesh and blood, but of the Spirit of God: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus". All that Christianity does is done in His name; like Him it is concerned with the new man, and therefore it brings His message of God's love which calls all the world to conversion and faith. We have nothing else to bring except what this "poor" Prince of Peace brought with His coming. And if in His service it is granted to us to make manifest something of His love in this world of hatred, if we succeed in bearing testimony that we have humbled ourselves under God's judgment and therefore do not set ourselves up to judge others, that, living by God's forgiveness, we ourselves also forgive and refuse to retaliate, then we shall belong to that company of our Lord's

followers of whom the Apostle says, "as poor, yet making many rich".

This is what Christians have to offer to a tormented world longing for peace, the gift which the Church of Jesus Christ brings that we may all be redeemed from the hell of our dissensions, that we may be new men who seek not their own good but the good of others. This offering, this gift, is not our work; it is God's, brought us by His Son, the Man of Nazareth. It is ours only if we let ourselves receive it.

The Foundations of Forgiveness

THEO PREISS

Do we know what forgiveness is ?

It is a formidable undertaking to say the Lord's Prayer: forgive us... as we *have* forgiven. The Greek is precise; we ask God to treat us as we have just treated our enemies. Can it be that the Lord's Prayer is a trap through which our own lips condemn us? No, but it is certain that there is nothing more terrible than the forgiveness of God if it stops at us without passing on to our neighbour.

We think that we know what forgiveness is. But do we? Are we capable of understanding what it means to be forgiven, or to forgive? The Lord's Prayer tells us clearly enough that we live by two facts: daily bread, which nourishes our bodies and forgiveness of sins, which is the life of our souls. And yet I hesitate to write the words "our souls". For perhaps this is one of our chief hypocrisies. Of course my soul lives by the

forgiveness of my sins, and I in my turn forgive the soul of so-and-so who has wronged me. But this is all, be it understood, a strictly spiritual and private affair. If we listen closely to the Lord's Prayer, we hear it say that *all* our life besides that of the body depends on the forgiveness of sins; not only our soul but our whole existence. And the word *our* is not a mere rhetorical formula. It means that our whole social life lives by forgiveness. We are perhaps ready to admit that marriage is based on the forgiveness of sin; but what of our collective, national, and international life?

Wise theologians will tell us at once that the Gospel of Love rules only in our individual relationships, but our collective and political relations depend upon *law* and on justice alone. The inquisitors of the middle ages prayed with fervour for the heretic's soul and burnt his body lightheartedly. And we when we fired on the Germans would try to say to ourselves: "I may be killing you, but I forgive you and I ask God's forgiveness". Only that was rather like saying: "I forgive you, but I am killing you and of course God will forgive me". I would not underestimate the complexity of the problem of relationship between love and justice, between forgiveness and atonement for crimes. I may well on my own account forgive the robber who has killed my brother, but have I any right to remove him from human civil justice?

God forgives

And still less may I remove him from divine justice? Here we must pause for a moment. Like all Christian motives the forgiveness of our enemies has been secularised into a human truth. We might unreservedly rejoice at this fact if it had not also meant that forgiveness had been debased, or at least made ambiguous and ambivalent.

We may "forgive" in the name of a wide and vague sentimentality which is indifferent to all strict justice;

we may "forgive" because we consider the criminal or enemy as a pathological case of irresponsibility, or an accidental case of abnormality; we may "forgive" by mere political or economic pragmatism because it is better to have a client than an enemy, or we may quite simply forget through superficiality. We may "forgive" because God is our *bon papa* and because we are all good fellows together!

Then are we to reject all these ambiguous kinds of forgiveness without qualification? I hope that the Providence of God may be able to make use of the worst confusions of men. But it seems to me that the devil also can, were it only through leading people to forgive each other with equal facility. For does all this forgiveness lift the burden of the past from the man who is thus forgiven? The past will secretly poison the future of both forgiver and forgiven. Above all such forgiveness will not establish a new human relationship because it does not take seriously enough the justice of God and the injustice of men. Peace, peace, and there is no peace... Is this not but a superficial dressing of a people's wound? Forgiveness of one's enemies is so contrary to the natural man that we have to make a constant effort to remember its urgency. But this tension makes us forget an elementary truth, one which paradoxically seems at first to lead us in a contrary direction: the Bible tells us with unmistakable clarity that One alone has the right and the power to forgive, namely God (Mk. 2: 7). Jeremiah has no right to intercede indefinitely before God for his sinning people. It comes to the point when God even forbids him (Jer. 11: 14; 14: 11; 15: 1). The intercession of Amos is successful twice in winning pardon, but the third time the justice of God is as strict as the mason's plumbline (Amos 7: 8). The whole Old Testament is one great cry which proclaims that the justice of God is as strict as any human balance, that the purchasing of a poor man for a pair of shoes is an attack upon the honour of God, a blot on His Holy name (Amos 2: 6),

that God meets the revolt and the injustice of men with the most terrible of punishments, and that in the end He will realise His justice and accomplish His glory.

It is a very superficial view — not less on the historical than on the religious plane — which takes pleasure in opposing to the righteous God of the Old Testament the God Who is the Father of Jesus. The God of Jesus is no less righteous than the God of Amos. If the God of Jesus were a *bon papa* or a “good fellow” he would have set indulgence at the heart of the Gospel instead of the forgiveness of sins. He has not proclaimed the abstract and impersonal truth that God is the Father, and all men are brothers, that “Dieu pardonne, c’est son métier” (Voltaire). Jesus affirmed that in Him, the Only Begotten Son, in Him alone and in His death rebellious men would once more become children of God and brothers of each other. The Son of Man stepped between God and every man, but also between every man and his neighbour. He invaded every horizontal relationship. Let us read His sayings literally: “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Mat. 25 : 40). “Henceforth know we no man after the flesh, we see all men in Christ” (II Cor. 5 : 16). As Divine Judge on the part of His Father “the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins” as in heaven (Mk. 2 : 10). Jesus does not only say in substance “Not yet hast thou considered how strong is the love of God”, but also “not yet hast thou considered how great is the weight of sin”. To weaken the second sentence is also to weaken the first. To underestimate the enemy means also to underestimate the victory and the Victor.

Uplifted for us on the right hand of the thief, but also on the right hand of God, He made of a forgiven thief the first member of His Church. And it was only the gift of His Spirit which gave the disciples power to proclaim in the name of God the great news: God forgives. God forgives in Christ, in giving His own son to death upon the cross. God perfected and manifeste

at one time both His love and His justice. We men are not able to be at one and the same time just and loving. Justice without God ravages the earth, and love without God is nothing but a pitiful sentimentality which heals wounds superficially.

The miracle of miracles

The very heart of the Gospel is the great news that God loved us even when we were His enemies, that enmity has been destroyed, that the cosmic war between the justice of God and the injustice of men is at an end, that our "act of accusation" has been nailed to the cross and destroyed. In the list which Jesus gives (Mat. 11 : 4-5) of the signs of the coming of the Kingdom, the miracles mount in a crescendo : "the blind receive their sight... the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them". Some of the old copyists were shocked at this and reversed the order : "good news... dead raised up". But for Jesus the resurrection of the dead is still but a trifle in comparison with the miracle of miracles : in His Son, God forgives sins and calls the lowest of sinners into the joy of His Father's house. Only God can be as generous as the Father of the Prodigal Son, or the Master of the Unforgiving Servant.

Forgiveness is the miracle of miracles. This is true of the forgiveness of God and of our forgiveness. For the miracle is in a sense doubled when it creates an image or a reflection. While God alone can forgive in His Son, He gives this privilege and this power to His children. From now on in the name of the Crucified and Risen One this power has been given to men. And let us not be too quick to distinguish between the vertical forgiveness of God to man and the horizontal forgiveness of man to man. The second is the fruit, and the necessary fruit, of the first (Mat. 18 : 35).

The forgiveness of sins is the greatest of miracles because it is the breaking forth of the new order, of the

new creation, the putting to death of the old man and the creation of the new. We are for ever being tempted afresh to see no more in forgiveness than a negative gesture wiping the blackboard clean. And then we say : "That's all it is ! But I am waiting for power and a new life from God !" In this "vitalism" it is easy to see God as no more than the power which starts up our car again for us to steer it where we will. The Bible prefers the apparently negative image of forgiveness. It not only takes seriously the assault made by sin on the holiness of God, but it knows that our personality can only live by a right relationship with God. It is difficult for us to grasp that the change of *relationship* caused by the forgiveness of sins is so fundamental. We think that a new relationship does not mean much. Do people see each other in a new light — what is that but an accident ? Does the very substance of our being not need to be changed ? All right. This is much more than a philosophical error which, confusing matter and personal existence, believes that substance is more real than the creation of a personal relationship ; it is a misunderstanding of the central fact without which we cannot understand much either in the Bible or in life. Our relationship with God *is* our life. And in the same way our life as individuals and as social persons *is* our relationship with our brothers. So when God forgives He does the most positive thing that can be imagined : He establishes a different relationship and that means a new life. He "repents" (Amos 7 : 3), He turns back to us again and looks at us no longer as we are, but through the changing and transfiguring prism of His Son. And this prism does really change the appearance. God's look is creative and straightens that which was crooked. Although we are still sinners we are truly justified by His look. When God looks at a man in Christ, *something* happens ; and when we look at our enemy in Christ something else will happen. That is why Jesus mingled so strangely His healings and His declaration of forgiveness ; that is why the Church, once

it takes the forgiveness of sins seriously, also admits miracles of physical and social healing. It is the whole world of the Resurrection and the Kingdom of God which thus breaks into this world of sin, of hatred and of death and declares its nearness.

In this lies a marvellous assurance. Even if our enemy is far from repentance, even if by all human laws there is scarcely a chance of his ever understanding, we can still forgive him in advance because God loved us and forgave us while we were desperately hardened, and because in the end He will overcome all obstacles. To be sure we cannot absolve the hardened sinner before he has repented. But we can assure him that we have forgiven him in advance because we cannot otherwise. Is this indulgence? By the very fact of brotherly love we shall show ourselves hard, as God afterwards is hard on the man who has not acted according to the power of his forgiveness (cf. the Unforgiving Servant, Mat. 18).

And now a radiant perspective of the history of the world opens before us. Behind all restlessness of the human races, behind the rise and fall of civilisations and empires, behind the puzzling history of the horizontal relationships of men we catch a glimpse of another dimension which is vertical, the history of the relationship of God to His humanity: "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all" (Rom. 11: 32). For God's last word — this is literally the case in the Greek — is His mercy.

Collectivities are real in God's eyes

Here we must rediscover a fact which has been greatly neglected. Is it not symptomatic that all traditional discussions on predestination started from the common postulate that God only predestined individuals? Let us read the Old Testament; there we only find the predestination of collectivities, of "generations", which are united in space and time, or racial figures like Abraham. The ninth to the eleventh chapters of Romans

speak of Israel and the nations as much as of individuals. The first and second chapters of Romans also speak of the sinfulness of Israel and of the nations. *Justification* is not only a process, a drama between God and a handful of individuals — it is that also no doubt — but it is also the solid web of the history of the world of nations with God who means to reconcile both what is on earth and what is in heaven (Col. 1 : 20). "The hand of God is stretched out upon all the nations, not only in providence but also in anger and mercy" (Is. 14 : 26). We are still apt to believe too much in a God Who is Providence on the one hand and a God Who is Saviour on the other.

Thereafter collectivities have in the eyes of God an existence, a responsibility and a destiny. It is too easy to make the objection that we find here a remnant of primitive mentality. The New Testament, while more personal than certain parts of the Old Testament, maintains the idea of collective values. Jesus delivers a malediction upon Chorazin and Bethsaida and Capernaum and proclaims that in the day of Judgment Tyre and Sidon and Sodom will be better treated (Mat. 11 : 20-25). We see too in Mat. 23 : 37, "Jerusalem... *tu... vous*", that collective and personal responsibility are not mutually exclusive. In the Book of Revelation each of the seven churches has a collective existence and responsibility. That is why the witness before kings and judges is so important. We must bear witness before the representatives of collectivities and influence them at the same time as individuals.

In the terrifying collectivisation of modern life, in the disintegration of a world which produces only that "massified man" (Ortega y Gasset) who drags himself from factory to cinema and then to the battlefield, in this gregarious and impersonal life one hesitates to talk of solidarity or collective responsibility. Would this not mean justifying the scientific neo-barbarism of the nazis, or the idea of collective responsibility which we find in *Darkness at Noon* and Hiroshima, and so many

collective memories? Should we not rather salvage all that still floats on the surface of the individualist and universalist humanism of the eighteenth century? One of the crimes which French intellectuals find it hardest to forgive the nazis for is just that they destroyed for us our faith in mankind. It is very sad to hear one of them say: "I can no longer think of the Germans as men". This individualistic humanism which is so deeply rooted in France has been, if not destroyed, at least very severely shaken. For years no Frenchman will any longer stand before a German without feeling behind both of them the whole nations which they represent and between them the weight of past horrors. It is hardly possible to escape this facing of facts by slipping on to the plane of an abstract humanism where one can forget the past and meet only as men. Such encounters are easier for the Anglo-Saxons who, in spite of all, really only know the Germans as enemies in that game called war where there was still room for "fair play". The experience of the occupied countries was too bitter; with the Gestapo there was no "fair play", not a vestige of the sporting spirit. And so the only true possibility of reconciliation is that forgiveness in which each, set before the Cross, recognises in the other a nation of sinners who will one day meet the punishment and the mercy of God.

All human relationships become impossible — beginning with marriage — because man is essentially an egoistic animal always in the act of justifying himself. This is true *a fortiori* of nations. Even if as individuals they are Christians and inclined to real forgiveness, the responsible leaders of a nation tremble before the catastrophic consequences which their indulgence has brought upon them since 1933, and prefer rather to remember the merits and interests of their nation. It is a tragic fact that at the very moment when technical progress at last brings within sight the technical solution of all the great problems of the world, human relations are becoming so disastrously difficult. They are not

"complicated" — a little common sense would solve them — but they are difficult because common sense is reduced to silence by collective passions which think only of self-justification by carefully built up myths. These passions are all the more dangerous and difficult to uproot for being lodged in the collective part of our being. Technology has to such an extent deluded and made abstract personal responsibility that an individual is now no more than a little wheel in a great gear-box. I remember a day in 1940 when I was in charge of a battery of artillery. I was stamping with joy as I saw the shells falling straight on the German positions; it was as if my team had scored a goal. It was only when I saw at a distance of 8 km. the stretchers carrying away the dead and the wounded that I realised that we had been killing men. But who had killed? Was it I, with my eyes and my observer's corrections, or the gunners, making their ritual gestures? Nobody and everybody. And so those who have a directing part to play see their *objective* responsibility spread to an unlimited extent, and in horror draw back into their *subjective* responsibility. At the trial of Nuremberg, and the trials of our own collaborators, it was clear that the same idea of responsibility was at stake. Pétain was responsible by his *passivity* alone for the massacre of I know not how many Jews. In truth man no longer feels that he is in command of his technical and administrative equipment. He readily becomes intoxicated with his power, but the moment after he is terrified by its consequences. It is a fact that behind this immense abstract apparatus there are always men. And men *are* responsible both personally and collectively. Of course this responsibility has degrees. It remains no less true for example that the German people has a historical solidarity with nazism, and that our victorious nations have a solidarity with the hateful stupidities of the occupation of Germany. If the Bible considers the peoples as in solidarity before God with their rulers, modern democracy must increase our collective responsib-

ility and apportion it to each individual. And our solidarity remains even if, like Niemöller, we have swum against the current with all our strength. For nothing justifies us, except the Grace of God, and all we have perhaps been able to do was no more than what was due.

It seems to me that this solidarity which is so definite in biblical realism, but which stands out no less clearly in the reality of the modern world, ought to broaden very seriously our classical ideas on the forgiveness of enemies. The Bible speaks to us of a blessing which extends over space and time to a thousand generations. It speaks to us also of collective forgiveness.

Prayer for "collectivities"

Hence we may and we must intercede for "collectivities" no less than for individual persons. In general we are apt to think of intercession for the nation, the state, and other collectivities, as if it were a kind of pious rhetoric, or politeness towards the powers that be. It is profitable to reflect upon the story of Abraham praying for Sodom (Gen. 18). Pious bargaining! If there had been ten righteous men the town would have been pardoned and spared. In the light of the Gospel we know that One alone is righteous, and that the righteous men of our Sodoms are only those who know themselves to be sinners and dependent upon the justice of God in Christ. Hence we may and we must intercede for all "collectivities" for the sake of the "righteous men", for the Church which is set up there to witness to the fact that it lives by forgiveness in Christ. We are well aware how precious, on the psychological plane, for renewed contacts, are certain Christians in enemy countries — Christians like Niemöller, von Thadden or Kagawa. But it is important that we should fully realise that the part to be played by the loyal Church which they represent is much broader and deeper secretly than appears on the surface of experience. The loyal Church, though very small, is not only the salt which has kept

Germany from corruption ; it is also the point of contact between God and the German people, the crystallising point of its true future. And because of this Church, which is His body, the Son, the Righteous One who intercedes not only for our sins, but also for the sins of the whole world, intercedes no less with His Father for the German people (I John 2 : 1-2).

Since the continual intercession of the Son with the Father ensures our forgiveness, the life of His body, which is the Church, must also involve intercession for the Sodoms of our day — and among these Berlin, to be sure, does not stand alone. Those who are outside the Church will always see in intercession an indulgence, the justification of sins, whereas it is in fact precisely the opposite ; it has nothing to do with a more or less diplomatic intervention which palliates the gravity of facts. It is offered in the name of justice, and also the Grace which is the Cross. This intercession may mean on the other hand, that man can be very hard *through love* (Mat. 18 : 15-18) on every effort made by another to justify himself, since the very meaning of intercession is at stake. I think that we must through brotherly love be very firm with our German friends as soon as they try to justify themselves. But we can only be so if at the same time we are hard on ourselves and do not attempt to justify what is being practised in Germany and elsewhere in our name. Europe will never begin to be healed until the German people begin to admit their responsibility, and the other nations admit that their attitude, so entirely negative as it is, must not perpetuate chaos and translate their bad conscience into fact.

The only way to reconciliation

How simple problems would be if each one of us would only give up establishing his own righteousness ! Let us not be under any illusion. Man is an ungrateful animal, and always tries to justify himself. But let

us be firm in maintaining that the finest of political principles has not the practical political virtue of our assurance that we are justified and reconciled by pure grace, just as the finest theories about marriage lack the concrete value, for maintaining and renewing married life, of mutual forgiveness. Without this humility and forgiveness, democracy has a fatal tendency to degenerate into competing egoisms hypocritically justified and camouflaged. "One World, or no World" is a true slogan. For a long time we thought that humanity felt itself to be of one *nature*. I am not sure if that is true. Bergson and others had serious doubts. It is at least true that the Bible is not based on that idea. In Eph. 2: 11-20 and Col. 1 the apostle considers it to be a miracle and pure grace that the gentile nations should become an integral part of the elected people, and he knows also no other unity for the human race than that of the body of the "*new man*", the new humanity, the Church created in Christ.

The wall of separation, enmity and hatred separates men from God and from one another. This wall is broken down by the event of the Cross and by the Resurrection. Only a "vertical" reconciliation can ensure the "horizontal" reconciliation of men in one body. The Church is the plenipotentiary who announces that this war is at an end, and this body already being formed. A plenipotentiary is not of much account, he is weak; but behind him is all the power of his sovereign who is to come. The children of God know that they are backed by Him, and see in their power to forgive the marvellous privilege of performing miracles. They see the forgiveness of the Father in the sun that shines, and in the rain that falls for just and unjust alike. They know that where two or three are gathered in His name, He Who is the peace of the world, is mysteriously present in all His power, that there forgiveness is a reality, and there is fulfilled that tremendous and prophetic event, the creation of a new humanity where there is no longer Greek or barbarian, master or slave.

Let us dare to believe

But we do not dare to believe that the past has really been abolished in Christ and that all things have become new. And in the Church we are all too like our poor statesmen who are imprisoned in that fear which seems to have been the chief conqueror in this war. We do not dare to believe in the forgiveness which Christ has established between the enemies of yesterday, between the East and the West today. We prefer to believe in the power of the "elements of this world", in the determinism of those vast collective forces which carry men away and seek to separate them from the love of Christ. Those who have lived through the upheaval have lost faith in mankind, and their hope is a tiny fragile plant. Despair distils cynicism, and in those quarters where there was extensive belief in man and in progress, the cancer of cynicism becomes all the more virulent because it has found a soil that is less immune. A mass injection of optimistic propaganda would not help here. Nothing can be done with that placid pacifism which would say: "Let us forgive! The Germans will be good fellows..." We are not so sure about that. Our forgiveness can never come from this facile pragmatism. It must come further, and it must go further. It will be as free as the sun and the rain, and as fertile. Let us rather believe that the least of our meetings between Christian ex-enemies may be of decisive importance; that the only events of real historic importance for our nations are those few encounters where two or three, or more, form a cell of the body of a new humanity.

It is difficult to see how to make order out of the puzzle of the world. Sometimes we wonder whether our actions as Christians, so limited as they are, and so weak in comparison with those monsters which are the powers of the world, can have any efficacy at all. And yet in some mysterious way this activity may be

more fruitful than the "fuss and bother" of U.N.O. Love alone is constructive and "edifying". And that is why Christians in particular have no right to despair of U.N.O. The intercession of Christians sustains the world. We have often been misled by optimistic illusions. But as Karl Barth said: "There are also pessimistic illusions". God will have the last word and the last word will be "His mercy".

In May 1944, in occupied France, a German soldier belonging to the confessing Church, made a strange proposition to me: that I should chair the weekly Bible study in which twenty or so of his friends met. I hesitated long; several of my friends had just been arrested and tortured, were indeed perhaps dead already. We were preparing in the Resistance for direct action against the German army. The German knew my ideas and he often used to ask me for the news which came through the B.B.C., but I had never told him that our Faculty group was a nest of the Resistance. Finally I accepted his offer. They asked me to take up the passage in John 16: 32-33. Among us there was a naval officer, non-commissioned officers and soldiers from every corner of Germany, all with their Bibles in their hands. When I emphasised that "I have overcome the world" did not only mean that Christ has overcome sin and death for individuals, but meant also a complete victory over all cosmic and political powers, the discussion became very remarkable. I said at the beginning that I was not in any sense a collaborator, but that I had come as a brother in Christ. They confessed the sin of their people, the crimes of the nazis against my fellow-countrymen, and the sin of their Church which had kept back the victory and sovereignty of Christ over individual souls. On that day I understood the meaning of the Church and the Communion of Saints. Two months later came the terrible struggles of the liberation. But in the middle of that anguish, when I was in command of one of the first POW camps of the province, I could never forget those brothers in Christ whom I had been

compelled to forgive. Today one of them still writes to me regularly, and I am sure that that fraternity in the middle of enmity was not in vain; it was rooted in the victory of the Crucified. He is risen again! We may labour in full confidence in the work of the Lord "knowing that our labour is not in vain in the Lord" (I Cor. 15: 58).

The way of peace which led from one to the other of those two enemy nations, Egypt and Assyria, passed through the Holy Land; the peace of the nations passes through Israel, through the Church, through the body of Him Who alone is our peace.

"In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria, the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance" (Is. 19: 23-25).

Forgiveness in the Bible

A Bible Study arranged by MARIE-JEANNE DE HALLER

Forgiveness is much discussed today in the Federation, but often without an understanding of its true basis. This study is designed to help us to find in the Bible what forgiveness really means.

I. FORGIVENESS AS THE ACT OF GOD

(A study on the words used in the Bible to express forgiveness)

"The Lord is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty..." (Numb. 14 : 18).

1. In the following texts who is it who forgives, or whose mercy is implored? When man in his turn is exhorted to forgive, to what other forgiveness is allusion nearly always made? (Gen. 18 : 26 ; Exod. 20 : 6 ff. ; 32 : 32 ; Num. 14 : 17-25 ; Neh. 9 : 17 ; Ps. 99 : 8 ; Is. 55 : 7 ; Jer. 5 : 1 etc. ; Mat. 9 : 2 ff. ; 9 : 6 ff. ; Mk. 2 : 7 ; Mat. 6 : 14 ff. ; Eph. 4 : 32 etc.)

What does this teach us about God's attitude to His rebellious children? Is there still hope for them? (Ezek. 3 : 11.)

2. What is the object of forgiveness? Can forgiveness of the sin or the sinner be confused with excusing a harmless fault or an irresponsible person? (II Sam. 12 : 13 ; II Chron. 7 : 14 ; Ps. 32 : 1 ; Ezek. 16 : 63 ; Mk. 2 : 5 ; Mat. 12 : 31 ; Lk. 23 : 34 ; Acts 8 : 22 ; I John 1 : 9 ; Col. 2 : 13.)

3. Is forgiveness merely an attitude of God, Who turns away His eyes from the sin and the sinner? Or is it costly? What light does this throw on the justice of God? Is His justice annulled by His compassion?

Or is it the triumph of a God Who takes sin seriously and treats it accordingly ? (Num. 14 : 17-25 ; 28 : 22 ; II Sam. 12 : 13-14 ; Is. 53 : 4-6 ; Mat. 26 : 28 ; I John 2 : 2 ; 4 : 10 ; Rom. 3 : 25 ; 5 ; I Cor. 15 : 3 ; Rev. 5 : 6 etc.)

4. As we face the Cross of Jesus Christ can we still speak of forgiveness in abstract terms ? Is forgiveness an abstract idea ? A moral concept ? What is the significance of the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ in relation to forgiveness ? (John 3 : 16 ; Eph. 2 : 4-5.)

II. A GOD OF MERCY

(A study in the Book of Jonah)

1. Who is the principal actor and master of the situation in this book ? God or Jonah ? (1 : 1-4 ; 1 : 17 ; 2 : 10 ; 3 : 1-5, 10 ; 4 : 1-11.)

2. What is God's Will for Nineveh ? What is the mission of Jonah in this plan ? Condemning or saving ? (1 : 2 ; 3 : 2-5, 8-10 ; 4 : 11.)

3. Does the God of mercy and compassion consider the sin of Nineveh as trifling ? (1 : 2 ; 3 : 4.) What argument does He give to Jonah as a reason for His mercy ? (4 : 10-11.) Does He find His motive in the repentance of the people of Nineveh or in the compassions of His own heart, which is rich in mercy ? (3 : 8-10.)

4. What is the relation between repentance and forgiveness ? Can we establish a rule as to the way in which the one conditions the other ? Is their inseparable nature not the only really important thing to notice ? (II Chr. 7 : 13-14 ; 30 : 9 ; II Sam. 12 : 13 ; Jer. 3 : 22 ; 26 : 13 ; 18 : 8 ; Ez. 18 : 21 ; Mat. 3 : 2 ; Lk. 13 : 3 ; Acts 5 : 31 ; Rom. 2 : 4 ; II Pet. 3 : 9 ; I John 1 : 9 ; Rev. 2 : 5 etc.)

What do we learn from the book of Jonah about the strategy of God in bringing men to salvation ? (Amos 4 : 6 ; Jonah 12 : 41.)

5. Why did Jonah not "do well to be angry" ? (4 : 4.) What makes his position a hypocritical one ?

(Is. 55 : 8-10 ; Jonah 4 : 10.) Is not Jonah himself someone who has been forgiven and who cannot look down on others (1 : 3, 12, 14 ; 2 : 10.) Have we never the right to reproach God for compassion shown to others ?

6. Is it exceptional that God should show compassion to a whole city as a unit ? Does God extend His interest to communities as well as to individuals ? (Gen. 18 ; Is. 19 : 21-25 ; Rom. 9-11 ; Lk. 10 : 13 ; Mat. 11 : 21 etc.)

7. Do we recognise the God of mercy who stakes everything on the salvation of Nineveh, the lost city, as the God of Jesus Christ ? May we say that in Jesus Christ this same compassion is fulfilled ?

III. FORGIVING OUR NEIGHBOUR

(A study in the story of the Unforgiving Servant)

"Blessed are the merciful : for they shall obtain mercy" (Mat. 5 : 7).

"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors... For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you : But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Mat. 6 : 12, 14-15).

1. What are the two sections of this passage and what is their relation to each other ? (18 : 21-22, 35 ; 23-34.) What is the value of the parable in this context ?

2. Who are the principal characters in the parable ? What are the facts ? Whom and what do they represent ?

3. What are the relations between the master and the servant ? What is the situation of the servant ? Has he any rights to assert ? What is his position in the eyes of legal justice ? And for what reasons is he let off ?

4. What does this teach us about the position of man before God, and of God's attitude to him ? What is the proof of His really taking this attitude ?

5. What is the meaning, and the consequence of this forgiveness for the relations of men to one another ?

Can a man who has been forgiven remain for long in that state by himself? Can he still look down on any of his fellow creatures? What does the detail of the indignation of the friends (v. 31) add to the story? What do we learn from the reference to the respective amounts of the two debts (vv. 24, 28) about the proportion between the forgiveness granted to us and that which we are called to show to others?

6. Are we really conscious of the seriousness of the situation as shown in vv. 34, 35? Can we regard the forgiveness of our neighbour as something we do at our pleasure? Can man who is the object of the grace of God behave as if nothing had happened? (Cf. John 8: 11; Mat. 18: 21, 22 ff.; Lk. 17: 3; Mat. 5: 23, 26; Mk. 11: 25; Col. 3: 13; Jas. 2: 12, 13 ff.; Zech. 7: 9; Mic. 6: 9.)

IV. FORGIVENESS AS CHRIST'S WORK OF RECONCILIATION

(A study in certain passages of St. Paul's Letters)

Ephesians 2: 4-7; 11-18

"Dead in sins... quickened together with Christ... reconcile... by the cross" (vv. 5, 16).

1. What are the effects of sin recalled in this passage? (a) Eph. 2: 1; Lk. 15: 24; Rom. 6: 23; Gen. 3: 19, 22; b) Gen. 11: 1-9; Eph. 2: 13; 11-12; 14-15.)

2. Is the reference here only to individuals? What are the results of reconciliation? (Is. 19: 21-25) and what is here the content of the work of forgiveness accomplished by Jesus Christ? In what sense is the unity of the Church already a sign of redemption and a manifestation of the Kingdom? (Gal. 3: 28; Col. 3: 11; Eph. 2: 21-22; 4: 16 etc.)

3. Can we pretend to live by forgiveness in Jesus Christ, when as individuals or nations we still continue to maintain hostility and enmity amongst ourselves? (2: 16-17.)

Colossians 1 : 12-20

"It pleased the Father... by him to reconcile all things unto himself" (1 : 19-20).

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2 : 9-11).

1. Is Jesus Christ the Saviour of men alone? Are His Lordship and His work of redemption limited to this world? (I Cor. 15 : 23-28; Rev. 2 : 8; 3 : 14; 22 : 13.)

2. Do we understand that our forgiveness is but one aspect of the drama of the Cross, the glorious mystery of redemption upon which hangs the existence of the whole world?

3. What is the new certainty which comes to illuminate our life and struggle here below? (Rom. 8 : 37-39.)

II Corinthians 5 : 17-21

"The ministry of reconciliation" — "Ambassadors for Christ."

1. "If a man be in Christ, he is a new creature." In Jesus Christ forgiveness expresses itself in the gift of a new life. What is that new life? (Lk. 19 : 8; John 15; Rom. 6 : 1-11; Rom. 12; I Cor. 12-13; Phil. 2 : 1-4; 3 : 14; Col. 3 etc.)

2. Henceforth what is the sole reason for the existence of man, who is the object of the Divine mercy? (II Cor. 5 : 18-19; Phil. 1 : 18-21; Rom. 12 : 14-17; II Tim. 1 : 7-8; I Pet. 4 : 11 etc.)

3. Are we ourselves ambassadors for Christ, dead and raised again with Him? Or do we suppose that we can benefit from forgiveness without our individual and corporate lives, and our relations with our fellows, being affected?

THE EDITOR'S TRAVEL DIARY

Off to South Africa !

A bout of lumbago in Geneva made South Africa doubly desirable ! So it was a dream come true to be flying over the snow-covered hills of central France and to come down for lunch in the windy sun of Marseilles. Then up again for Malta, and an uncomfortable climb to 22,000 feet to get above the weather, with always the feeling that you would have to come down through it again, and we did. Some people saw the lightning, but my eyes were closed in misery !

Malta was true to its reputation. We had not meant to linger there but the Royal Scots and the Manchester Regiment "shewed us no little kindness : for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain and because of the cold". As we turned in for this unexpected night's sleep in a barracks I wondered if a trip to South Africa was after all the best cure for lumbago, and I had a certain sympathy for the elderly fellow-passenger who murmured as he fell asleep on a camp-bed : "Was this what I left Clapham for ?" But our troubles seemed light as we saw the cream-coloured houses rise out of the violet sea at dawn. Soon we were flying over Benghazi and other legendary names, and it was hard to realise why men had fought so strenuously over this barren sandy coast. Cairo brought the welcome interlude of a talk with Ken Baker, who had spent the summer at rue Calvin, and some of his colleagues in the American University. I even climbed the roof to see the Pyramids, and they managed to convey their sense of ageless mystery above the roofs of the city.

Cairo to the Cape

By moonlight we set off from Cairo and I had really begun to traverse an unknown Continent. Khartoum at two in the morning did not stir in her sleep, and to stand beside the Nile and see the opposite bank outlined dimly in the darkness brought refreshment

from the noise of the plane. The next lap was for me the continuation of a pilgrimage begun in Westminster Abbey the previous Sunday, or begun long ago. For one born and brought up within sight of the tenement of one-roomed houses in Blantyre, where David Livingstone was born, it was an obvious act of pietas to visit that great slab in the floor of the nave of Westminster Abbey, which bears his name, before setting out on an African journey. And now, as we flew over these vast territories, accomplishing in hours of comfort what cost Livingstone years of toil and agony, the burden of human endeavour came upon me. "Brought by faithful hands..." the inscription had read, and I seemed to see ten thousand feet below those silent bearers on their self-imposed task of carrying to the coast for months on end the body of their master.

The Africa, which Livingstone opened up, is now far more accessible to the European than he could ever have dreamed. The sign of human progress is in the bright silver planes that criss-cross the continent, but they cast their shadows too. Slavery has gone, but its legacy remains in human attitudes. Education is advancing with bewildering speed but the future of Africa to which it must be directed still lies hidden. The opportunities and responsibilities of a continent began to haunt me. What with the problems of Russia and the West, and of Asia and the West, could not Africa wait? But human situations never wait, and I began to see why questions had been raised at the meeting of U.N.O., which I was later to find had aroused such indignation in South Africa. The Federation has never taken Africa very seriously. At the General Committee of 1946 Latin America was to have been the main new item perhaps, but the West African delegates certainly shared the honours. So I threw a friendly glance in the general direction of West Africa as the steward drew away my attention to Kilimanjaro standing out boldly eastwards above the mist, and began to dream of an African student Conference in Uganda! Why Uganda? Because it seemed roughly in the middle of my small scale map of Africa, and its students are to be found in Cairo and at the Cape!

A night in Nairobi at a streamlined caravanserai with twenty-two items in the dinner menu had no meaning at all. Aeroplanes, like ships, have created their own international port facilities, and there can be few worse angles for seeing a city than from the bus between hotel and airport. Up in the air again and in an hour

or two I was suddenly handed a scrap of paper which said "In ten minutes you will be crossing the Zambesi; the Victoria falls are a hundred miles on your right!" I strained my eyes in vain. I thought I saw villages and I thought I saw wild animals, but the films have the benefit of a running commentary and the Zoo is more intimate. So I settled down to my own reflections, and a charming book about the English countryside, until reality would summon me again. After eight hours in the air it did so at Johannesburg.

The Face of South Africa

Johannesburg has the unmistakable air of an American mid-western city. It combines in the same way the primitive wooden of buildings residence and business with the vast hives of modern office life. Outside it are the same shacks and the same garden retreats. Where there might have been grain elevators or oilwell pylons, there were the curiously symmetrical and tomb-like dumps of refuse from gold mines. But on this visit I was too bewildered to see much, for next morning by 5 a.m. I was on the road to Stellenbosch, 950 miles away. François du Toit, who edits the fortnightly paper of the South African Student Christian Association called *The Clarion*, itself an indication of the up-and-comingness of the Movement I had arrived to visit, offered to motor me southwards because the trains were full, and there was no plane reservation for a day or two. I can recommend a thousand miles by car in two days as a method of painting in the background of a country. The road information map kept on informing us that the country was "featureless" — a ridiculous comment. As in people, so in countries, picturesqueness is not so interesting as character on a face. The High Veld, and the Karoo with their gradually changing vegetation, their great satisfying sweeps of space, always ending in a rim of shapely hills, constantly changing in colour, drew me into their confidence. The road followed the railway line with its steady traffic of goods and passenger trains, some of which became quite familiar to us over the journey. The railway and the roads lie like chains on this vast plateau to bind it to the needs of men, but the land escapes and dominates. The blockhouses and the British soldiers' graves at the lost railway sidings spoke of a tragic stage in the making of South Africa. The big tree-planted towns

which appeared so surprisingly out of the empty veldt spoke of a more constructive process. But the land seemed still untamed, and I realised why White South Africans retain that restless energy, and that way of looking through their eyes beyond you. It was a wonderful journey, and I have seldom felt so elated as when I heard the call of the grouse and caught a glimpse of a springbok at half-past-four in the morning.

As we travelled south through the Cape Province the mountain ranges came more frequently, and turned greener. Suddenly we plunged into the Hex valley with its vineyards, and soon began to see the fine old Dutch and Huguenot farms amidst the great oaks and the gorgeous jacquarandas. The mountain passes by which we wound to Wellington, and Paarl and Stellenbosch, gave a stiff finish to the journey, as if the continent were unwilling to disclose the final secret of its beauty. We picked our way through the old streets of this dream university town with its white gables, and its gardens and its running water. And finally we shook the thick dust from our clothing in the cool entrance of the S.C.M. headquarters.

Stellenbosch and the Afrikaners

I had not realised that the Students' Christian Association founded by Luther Wishard of America and Donald Fraser of Scotland would celebrate its jubilee largely in a language I could not understand! I was conscious all through the national conference of a puzzling conflict between familiarity and unfamiliarity. The four hundred former members, present-day students, and schoolboys and girls, who filled the long summer days with prayer meetings and Bible studies, speeches and discussions, films and committee meetings, interspersed with fragments of religious choruses, reminded me forcibly of the only American Church supper I had ever attended! There was an atmosphere of gaiety and earnestness which warmed my heart immediately. Further the famous Afrikaans generosity engulfed me and I found myself making friends with incredible rapidity. The birthday books of South Africa are dotted with my signatures! Yet there was an element of strangeness, for in a political, and partly in a religious, sense I was an alien. The Afrikaans language, which has such a friendly sound

and sings so well, recalls an unforgotten history, and challenges the ambiguous present. Nationalism, which theoretically is entirely outmoded, and yet seems to be raising its alarming head everywhere, is still in South Africa the fulfilment of religious emotion. And so, while I was welcomed, I was also unintentionally shut out, all the more so because I was British, somewhat the less so because I came from the country of the saintly Andrew Murray, the great inspiration of the Dutch Reformed Church, and the first Chairman of the S.C.A.

I think it was good for me to be so politically disturbed by Afrikaans nationalism, though, if I were to be honest, I had to be constantly giving offence. But the Federation staff has perhaps had Christian Resistance in Europe as its stock-in-trade for too long. It was salutary to find that, since few people, except an older, and I thought more sensitive, group, had been aware of the menace of fascism, and some had been confused by its South African form, the story of churches which had been tried by fire was not by itself convincing. What everyone wanted to know was whether the other national movements in the Federation were evangelising the student world.

A Centre of Evangelism

Evangelism, like so many of the greater words, has become a divisive term. One tends to use it as a defence of one's position, and a weapon against anyone who questions it. Here at Stellenbosch I heard much of "evangelistic meetings", of "personal work", of "being converted by so-and-so". The S.C.A. prides itself in having maintained this work at the very centre of its activity, and I saw much evidence of the reality of the claim. The isolation of South Africa has frozen the religious modes and language of an elder day. If you want to see Christian work amongst students as it was fifty years ago, you can see it in Stellenbosch today. You can find its literature in the bookshop newly published, and you will be less than honest if you do not acknowledge that it is still amazingly effective. This could never have happened had the vast majority of the Afrikaans-speaking students not been nurtured in the Dutch Reformed Church, into whose Calvinist categories the S.C.A. has poured a Methodist fervour.

The conventional pattern of division, now being so miserably set in many countries, would place the Afrikaans section of the S.C.A. upon the biblical revivalist side of the line of judgment, and expect it to be sectarian in its attitude to the Federation. But this is gloriously untrue. The South African S.C.A. is intensely loyal to the Federation, genuinely anxious for increasing contacts, and has launched an effort to raise funds for student and Christian reconstruction. It was interesting to discover that in a previous general relief appeal Stellenbosch University, which by reason of political differences is outside the National Union of Students, had been one of the largest givers. Frontal attack on the Afrikaans position, politically or religiously, would be hopeless, even if it were conceivably justified. The Afrikaners constitute a race that has always had to fend for itself, which feels that it has constantly been misunderstood and had its trust betrayed, and which is naturally jealous of its own religious culture. But I was never amongst a group of young people who had a stronger sense of fellowship, or a more joyful faith, or a more abundant energy. As we reconsider our methods of evangelism, which we certainly must do and as the S.C.A. leaders know they too must do, we shall benefit enormously if we can capture for wider use some of that passionate conviction which humbled me as a visitor to Stellenbosch.

The Race Problem in the S.C.A.

I suppose it is because we are all so racially conscious that we expend more righteous indignation against racial discrimination elsewhere than against other and perhaps even more disastrous forms of discrimination nearer home. At any rate most "enlightened" people think of the race problem when they think of South Africa. And U.N.O. had a good time, as it shelved its most pressing problems, in castigating European South Africans. This must be said in justice, and not in condonation of a racial situation in South Africa which appears at once tragic and ludicrous, incomprehensible and obvious to the stranger. The trouble about any great human problem, of which decent men are ashamed, is that they either exaggerate it or whitewash it. That was why I found such delight in learning about the Institute of Race Relations and in finding what a wide range of South African opinion was to be found in its supporters.

South Africa has a race problem with terribly tough religious, cultural, political and economic roots, and of alarming proportions. But it is not an insoluble problem, for men's consciences are awake, and, while I was horrified by some of its manifestations, I was encouraged by a rich variety of attempts to tackle it. Above all it is a human problem. I recall two conversations. In one an Afrikaner in the Cape Province pointed out that while the African native was the raw product of the kraal, the Indian had an ancient civilisation. In the other an Englishman, long resident in Natal, pointed out that while the Indian was a crafty and useless alien, the African native was nature's gentleman. In an almost literal sense you pay your money and you take your choice! In my four weeks experience the most hopeful sign was the frequent evidence of courtesy and friendliness between individuals of different races, and the saddest sign the unconscious lack of sympathy between the European and the non-European races taken as groups.

The Stellenbosch Conference could not be said to be fully inter-racial, but it included, besides the large Afrikaans majority, a score of English-speaking students, and a dozen Bantu and Coloured students. Lest the reader be in any doubt, the term Bantu is used for the native African peoples, and the term Coloured for those of mixed race, who have a long history in the Cape Province. Clearly the English-speaking members of the S.C.A. are more troubled in their consciences than the average Afrikaans group, where indeed the conscience is sometimes troubled in the reverse direction. But it was clear at the Conference that when any intelligent Christian-minded group of European South African students meets their intellectually equal non-European contemporaries, a deep sense of respect is fostered, and a process of questioning sets in, which must be of incalculable importance. The Bantu delegates told me that for them the conference had been a great experience, and that they had felt part of a real Christian fellowship.

Of course it was not a free encounter. We ate separately and there were subtle distinctions hard to define, and harder still to overcome. The leaders of the S.C.A. have been cautious, but they have had their fingers burnt in the past. South African political protagonists are apt to make unscrupulous use of any inter-racial happening. But no-one can deny that the S.C.A. is the only Christian and only youth organisation which includes all the races. Sometimes

the leaders have felt that the Federation was a little like U.N.O. in its attitude! I hope I was able to convince them that we are a fellowship which does not sit in judgment upon its members, but in which we are all made to look again as Christians at our attitudes and actions.

The Garden Route and the Bantu Section

On the road again; this time with Fred Liebenberg, and his son Leon, to conduct me. Capetown has the same charm as Rio de Janeiro, with mountain and sea to give dignity to a modern city, and remind man that nature is older and more lasting in her creation. Up from the great sweep of False Bay we climbed over Sir Lowry's Pass, the first of innumerable saddles, and dipped suddenly down into pine woods, and orchards. Then began a lovely sequence of forest and inlet and moorland and mountain which continued until Port Elizabeth. I was always being reminded of somewhere else, whether by a roadsign to Glen Fruin or Coldstream, or more intelligently by vistas of beauty. But the journey served to confirm an impression that there can be few countries in the world with such an amazing range of scenery as the Union of South Africa. And with an intelligent guide you do not only see scenery, you see people and history and crops and all the hopes and fears of men. The infinite possibilities or the infinite complexities of life in South Africa — you can choose which you will dwell upon, but both are fascinating.

Our main purpose in taking this route was to reach Alice, the remote little town where the South African Native College of Fort Hare, and Lovedale, the great Scottish Missionary centre, are situated. It was the middle of the long vacation, and we scarcely expected to find anyone to receive us, but by luck we found Principal Kerr of Fort Hare, back for the day, and Dr. Shepherd of Lovedale, and even had lunch with a Glasgow fellow student, R. L. Kilgour! Buildings without the people who inhabit them are always a little forlorn, but these were buildings which missed their students, and somehow made you think of happy and eager faces. And here and there there was such a face, a hospital nurse, a driver, a servant girl, which reminded me of the power and gladness of the Gospel. Dr. Stewart of Lovedale's tower dominates the little valley like

a noble reminder of an eternal truth. A missionary centre always gives me new faith and courage because it has the secret of the future, as nothing else has.

My two or three Bantu friends, alas, were all away on much-deserved holidays. How I wished I could have greeted them, but to hear how men, who had given leadership to the British S.C.M. and the Federation, were building Church, school and hospital in Africa was itself worth coming for. There are many histories written on the face of Africa, and the mind is often troubled by their diversity. But the developing life of the Bantu section of the S.C.A. and its integration in the total movement speaks well for the future. A movement in schools and colleges of three thousand members would rank high by itself in any Federation record. And these Bantu groups have been built up by the strenuous and patient work of their own secretaries, like S. S. Tema and Eric Tikili today. I found the name of Max Yergan, the American Negro leader, still frequently coming into the conversation. Few men from another country can have made so profound an impression on a student movement. The more I saw of the problems of the native races of South Africa, or of plans for dealing with them, the clearer stood out the unusual significance of this company of men and women, pledged to work for the advancement of their people but always within a simple and profound loyalty to Jesus Christ.

English-speaking South Africa

My first two weeks in the Union were spent almost exclusively in the company of Afrikaans-speaking friends, my second two weeks with English-speaking ones. This serves to show how separately the two European sections of the country live their lives. Of course, in the Free State one would expect to find a majority of Afrikaners, and in Natal a majority of English people. But it is a strange experience to find two streams flowing separately in the same riverbed! Naturally, with the language difficulty removed, I felt more like myself, and found my companions more like myself. And yet the problems of the English section were different from those in Britain or the States or Canada. For one thing, the English section is a minority in its student movement, and I cannot think of anywhere else that such a phenomenon occurs! But in Syd

Hudson-Reed, the Travelling Secretary, in Margaret Snell, formerly part-time Secretary and once of Annandale, and in Sheila Burnet, who as Sheila Trollip did such a gallant job in the war years, I had colleagues with whom conversation never flagged, and painstaking interpreters of the whole South African scene.

Syd Hudson-Reed trundled me around in a series of aged cars, which he handled with loving dexterity; and through his eyes I was able to see some of the problems of the metropolis of Johannesburg, including its urbanised native life. Although I only met the Witwatersrand S.C.A. branch in fragments I began to admire its courage and versatility. But, as I have said before in this diary, it is the civic university student rather than the cloistered one who holds my first affection! Clearly the main problem of the English section is to live its own life and bear its own witness in a far more pagan environment, without losing the strength, or being intimidated by the particular form of piety, of the Afrikaans section. Here at once I noticed the difference between student work which is closely related to the life of a national church, which the Dutch Reformed Church really is, and one which receives cordial but insufficient backing from a small group of ministers in a variety of Churches. The English section has to create its own ethos, and the materials are thin. By far the most encouraging feature in this regard seemed to be the magnificent faithfulness of a minority group of professors. If they had not cared badly about the S.C.A., perhaps the English-speaking branches would not have survived some of their misadventures.

But it was in Durban and Pietersmartzburg that I began to realise the significance of this section of the S.C.A. The need for an independent, theologically mature and adventurous body of Christians in a country like South Africa is an outstanding one. Where could they be looked for save out of the universities? And the student movement at its best has a genius for creating just such a body. There have been curious gaps in the history of the English Section, but the plant has gone on growing, and throwing out new shoots. Today it gives every evidence of flowering again, and its past fruit is found in unexpected places.

Indeed, since I saw so few students I found myself frequently thinking of the two European sections of the S.C.A. in terms of results. As you pass through small South African towns you will

find old members of the Afrikaans section everywhere as schoolmasters and ministers. The effect of this section has been astonishingly widespread. Indeed the Afrikaans section with its work in two hundred and sixty secondary schools has become a national institution, as perhaps the movement in no other country has done. Thousands of men and women must have found faith, or been strengthened in their faith, by passing in and out of S.C.A. groups. With the English section it seems different. The results are not so widespread. The work is not so well grounded. Finances are difficult to raise. Yet I had the feeling that here and there throughout South Africa there were restless eager men and women, who would not let the conventions, or the dead weight of economic values, prevent them from challenging the very structure of the society in which they lived. A deep Christian culture and an utterly pagan one exist side by side in South Africa. Everyone lives, whether happily or uneasily, in both; and Christians must accept a share of responsibility for the duality. The task of the S.C.A. is surely both to strengthen the foundations of men's faith, and to open their eyes to the real meaning of that faith in a society which at so many vital points bitterly denies it.

Homeward Bound

We left Johannesburg on a Monday morning, passed the afternoon and night at Nairobi again, lunched at Khartoum, supped at Cairo, breakfasted on Malta, and were at the London airport at mid-day on Wednesday. I had seen everything and nothing. What had been the value of my journey?

One of the most characteristic sights of Africa from the air is the round bare patches where men have lived for a time and then moved on to build a new village. It is the instinct of civilisation. A French traveller gave me a blue hand of a little figure from an ancient tomb to give to a child in Europe as a treasure. It seemed to be a symbol of civilisation. Over the Nile a Jewish fellow passenger asked haltingly: "It was here, was it not, that they hid Moses amongst the bulrushes?" He knew he was near the cradle of his faith. Human life is so very old; it seems scarcely worth while to seek to change it.

But in Cairo Ken Baker had thirty students to meet me for

an hour. There were Egyptians, Ethiopians, Africans, Transjordanians, Armenians, Palestinians and Greeks among them. They represented the Coptic, Armenian, the Greek Orthodox, the Roman Catholic, the Anglican, the Reformed confessions. Christianity is very old too. God in Christ has been at work changing human life all these centuries. He has never lost interest, nor lost heart. Why should we not have student Christian movements in every country of Africa, and in the lands of the Near East, where our faith was first believed ?

As our plane door was shut at five in the morning at Malta for the last lap, I heard the church bells in the campaniles of the towns below break into sound. Another day of life had begun, and it could be a day of worship. All this travel which we do in the Federation means nothing unless our deepest prayer is that all our human efforts to build a living fellowship in Africa and every continent may be begun, continued, and ended in Him.

R.C.M.

THE STUDENT WORLD CHRONICLE

A Call to Youth

This fine statement was recently prepared by a group of Bantu Christian leaders in South Africa, many of whom have been well known in Federation circles. It was given to the editor on his recent visit to Fort Hare African Native College.

A Dilemma

Ours is often referred to as a *nation at the crossroads*, faced with the by no means easy problem of deciding which way to go. The difficulty is aggravated by the fact that our advance into the new light is not a steady and natural one but so rapid, because dictated by external forces, that the minds of many are reeling with the swiftness of it all. There is therefore indecision, and confusion all around.

The whole society is in a *state of flux*. Even the so-called primitive among us are not primitive at all. Their wants, their outlook, their ambition and even their songs are being influenced by Western culture. The semi-educated try to live in both the old and the new order to their discomfort and embarrassment. Many of the educated, transplanted into the soil of the West are suffering "because they have no root". We are witnessing a "*great trek of a whole people to a new life*". They have "struck their tents and are on the march"; but whither?

The Old Order

In the old tribal life, with all its limitations, the family was *the social unit*. The head of the family was its veritable "justice of the peace". No family lived in isolation. Each was linked

to its kin-group, and within this relationship pattern each member "lived and moved and had his being". From it he received his standards of life and by it was set on the way to life. The old men of the tribe were both law-givers and *guardians of tribal traditions* which they had to hand down to posterity untarnished. With the chief at the head they were a great directing and unifying force. The religion of the people, linking them to the spirit world, was one of the most stabilising factors in African society.

The New Order

In the new order into which we have entered these *foundations are rocking*. In many cases they have completely broken down. "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?"

Poverty, the bane of our life, has made many parents dependent upon their children for the means of subsistence. The result has been the weakening of parental control and the undermining of authority in the home. Parents in this sad plight are often forced to connive at and condone the evil done by their children. Again, children go off to work very early in life, and so, untrained and ill-equipped, they are thrown into the whirlpool of our industrial centres. The enforced absence of many parents from home has made many children grow without any discipline at all. Is it any wonder that such children generally find school discipline irksome and irritating! Many homes have ceased to be *anvils for the shaping of character*. The responsibility of shaping these children remains with our day schools, Sunday schools and other youth organisations.

In the old order life had a spiritual meaning. Today we see "two divergent forces at work among the people — secular forces within Western civilisation tending to destroy the spiritual tradition of African life; and the Christian Church striving for the emergence of that life on a higher plane". Which shall ultimately triumph?

The detribalising forces of modern life have made and are making serious inroads into African tribal life. The tribe is no longer a unifying force. The people must find a *new centre of unity and common loyalty*. What will that centre be?

A Call to Youth

With startling suddenness we have been whirled into modern currents with results that fill many with anxiety if not with foreboding. The moral standards of the people are breaking. *Drink and immorality* are taking a heavy toll of our youth. The homes, battered and shattered, raise no voice of prophecy. Those who raise the red light of warning are unheeded. Meanwhile the choice life of our youth goes headlong down the precipice. Life in our towns is becoming unsafe. There is a growing disregard for the *sanctity of human life*. Our educational institutions are becoming centres of *unrest and unbridled hooliganism*. And unless a halt is called, the future is indeed bleak. "Who is sufficient for these things?"

We present this picture of the broken walls of our national life with the hope that our youth will see what is at stake. This is our crisis hour.

Our schools, through the teachers, must be in the vanguard reclaiming disintegrating and lost young life and bringing back *self-respect and decency* to our villages and communities. We must give a new vision to a people perplexed and confused. Where there is no vision the people literally perish. Is this not the kind of situation that should make any of us educated young men and young women say. "*For their sakes I sanctify myself?*"

It is our firm conviction that education alone will not save our people and us. The economic upliftment of the people alone, desirable as this is, will not carry us to our haven. The social betterment of conditions of life alone will not stop the downward pull of base desires. National pride alone is not a secure foundation to build upon. Christ alone, who is "the Way, the Truth and the Life" will help the race to rediscover its lost confidence and to receive a new vision, "for what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

We appeal to our youth, to our leaders, to our people to rally round the "New Standard", the Christ of God and the Hope of man.

Z. K. MATTHEWS
B. B. MDLEDLE
S. M. MOKITIMI

R. T. BOKWE
D. D. T. JABAVU
J. J. R. JOLOBE

De Universitate

For the past two years we have been accumulating documents bearing upon the subject-matter of the Grey Book entitled The Task of the Christian in the University. Many of these were incorporated only in part, or not at all, in the Grey Book and more continue to arrive. Since much of this material is of wide interest we are using The Student World Chronicle as a medium publication, so as to stimulate discussion.

The Grey Book has been received much more warmly than could have been anticipated; so we hope that it may become the basis of a widespread and a deeper consideration of the issue which it raises. One way forward is by criticising the Grey Book; so we begin with a summary of some of the most interesting criticisms which have yet been received. We hope, and know the W.S.C.F. well enough to be confident, that there will be more.

A Frenchman writes :

“Your pages are very interesting and illuminate the question by their anglo-saxon perspective. In particular, the notion of the Integral University is excellent, as well as the analysis of the necessary *a priori* conditions. Your advice in the last two chapters is absolutely confirmed by our experience.

“I would make two criticisms. 1) You seem to be influenced by neo-thomism; so that you do not show sufficiently clearly why the totality of philosophical and humanistic tradition expounded by the Roman Catholic Church is not acceptable. You are also too critical of the cultural effect of the Reformation, for I believe that it gives us the embryo of a tradition whence we can start. 2) You give too much the impression of adapting yourself to existing conditions. In some cases the University is more deeply broken than you suggest”.

A British mathematician writes :

"I rejoice that the Federation is giving thought and time to a work of such capital importance... I think that in Chapter III you do a valuable work by insisting on the existence of axioms and the necessity of stating them, but I am not quite clear about your emphasis on the word "unconscious". I have two criticisms here. 1) If the influential abstract ideas are and remain unconscious, how can they be in any way known? 2) It would be nearer the mark to say that these ideas are partly conscious and partly unconscious. One of the main points in the business of "knowing thyself" is to focus these ideas in the conscious mind. It is a fact in my own experience that such ideas can be so brought to light.

"I think that Christ gives a spiritual sense to His disciples which enables us Christians to see through ourselves and other people in a way which could be disconcerting to the world if it were not for His accompanying gift of love. Oldham's remark, which you quote on page 40, is utterly true".

A young American mathematician, a non-Christian, writes :

"I have just finished reading your "grey paper" and I found that a little snow dabbed at the temples is a good antidote for some of the after effects... But seriously, I must say that, deeply as I regret it, I believe that your entire effort is running counter to the prevailing thought of the times and is more likely to sink in the stream than to serve as a rock where the drowning may seize hold. My objection is that you lay too much stress on a working Christianity, but not at all on the factors which, in our society, make it impossible for most men to be Christians. I refer to the psychological and emotional conditions of these unhappy people. You are striving to touch their hearts by an appeal through their minds alone and it cannot work, for their inner souls are hedged with fears and doubts, anxieties and neuroses, lusts and conceits that will forever keep your working Christianity out. I could almost place some trust in psychiatry — perhaps a combination of the two — but I doubt, I doubt. This then, is my objection to all your sweet reasonableness. It lies at the very fundamentals of all attempts to modify

human behaviour. For the rest, I think your paper is an admirable, well thought-out piece of work even if engendered in an atmosphere of too much religious thought and too little thinking about people”.

Yet another mathematician, this time a Canadian :

“The high point of your Grey Book to my mind is your treatment of the “Seven Deadly Axioms” which lie very close to the foundation of my own thinking on the matter. This is very intimately connected with Kirkegaard’s contention that knowledge of God must come from within... that fact that the axioms in question are *axioms*. I am completely convinced on Kirkegaard’s point here. This, in conjunction with the fact that all scientific and other study is based on axioms, is the foundation of my philosophy. It seems obvious when stated in this way.

“The concept of *significance* then enters in the choice of axioms and in the choice of conclusions from the axioms. It is important to note that what is intuitively understood by the human mind (which is made in the image of God) as a fundamental truth cannot be arrived at from *arbitrary* axioms. Our axioms have never been perfect. Even in the simplest case of mathematics, for example, there are the horrible paradoxes which have arisen in recent years in the Theory of Sets, and the shift in approach between classical and modern physics is even more startling.

“The problem of *significance* is the essential thing characterizing the approach of the scientist who acknowledges God. To me the greatest weakness of your book is your sketchy treatment of this. You make an utterly horrible remark about “Christ standing outside the door” when the question comes up. This gave me a feeling of nausea of the same sort as induced by a nineteenth century sugary hymn-tune. I know you meant well, but really !!

“I contend that Christ is not the supreme revelation of God’s will in this respect, that is, of the criteria of significance of method and content in our work. The decision about such questions must come directly from prayer and personal communion with God”.

Philippe Maury writes from California :

"Two weeks ago I had the good fortune of a long conversation with Arnold Nash. We came to the conclusion that probably the main difference between you, Arnold and myself concerned our definitions of the word "truth". It seemed to us that you were taking an extreme position that could almost be identified with that of Thomism. I base my approach on a Barthian position refusing any sort of continuity between revealed and natural truth. I would react against you on two grounds, the first being the impossibility of any kind of natural theology and the second that I cannot conceive any theological truth which does not have a direct bearing on our salvation. It seems to me that the main danger of your position is to depersonalize Christian truth and to make it a sort of objective system that would become the matter of impersonal scientific truth, instead of always remembering the very direct and personal word of God to the individual man concerning his situation here and now. I agree totally with you in so far as you produce a criticism of the present University but I become much more sceptical when you begin to make a positive statement of the grounds on which a Christian University could be built ; it seems to me you are going too far in the direction of the Roman Catholic conception of a Christian civilization".

In his last sentence Philippe Maury reveals the fact that he has been too busy to read the Grey Book carefully because the idea of the Integral University which I expose is an explicit rejection of any form of Christian university. At the moment, I shall be content to defend myself on this one point only, because it is one on which I have also been misunderstood by the defenders of "objectivity". Thus at a Swedish university I was met by a brilliant young *docent* who said he had enjoyed reading the Grey Book and then immediately launched into a vigorous attack on the idea of a Christian university !

I hope that all of the above will stir up some thought and that part of this will find its way quickly to Geneva.

A. JOHN COLEMAN.

BOOK REVIEWS

CHRISTIAN FAITH AND MY JOB by ALEXANDER MILLER. A Haddam House publication. Association Press, New York, 1946. \$ 1.00.

BEYOND THIS DARKNESS by ROGER SHINN. A Haddam House publication. Association Press, New York, 1946. \$ 1.00.

The Hazen Foundation in the United States, which was responsible for the publication of the Hazen Books on Religion during the past decade, is the sponsor of a new series known as the Haddam House books. The first two volumes, *Beyond this Darkness* by Roger Shinn, and *Christian Faith and my Job* by Alexander Miller, give every indication that once again the World's Student Christian Federation owes a debt of gratitude to the Hazen Foundation for its initiative in a publishing enterprise which will be of great service to students, not only in America, but all over the world.

In *Christian Faith and my Job*, Lex Miller's aim, based on the premise that the claim of Christ is a total claim, is to examine the implication of this fact in the realm of vocation. One is filled with admiration for the comprehensive approach he has made to his subject, for the succinctness of his ideas and the compactness of his thought, and for the profoundly practical value of his insights which have at the same time a high degree of spirituality. His own work experience gives a special validity to all he says.

I find myself led into a number of reflections à propos of the author's remarks on the rôle of the Christian Church in relation to the individual and his vocation. He makes the point that it is the responsibility of the Church and the minister to give

the individual a Christian view of the world and to help him understand his business as a Christian. This means presenting an Everyman's theology in the language that Everyman understands and that "hits him where he lives", to use the American figure of speech. Perhaps it is here that the Church fails most pitifully. Elsewhere the author points out the problem of great numbers of war veterans who have moved toward the Christian ministry in this postwar period in the attempt to give the best service they know to the life of their day. I wonder if the move toward the theological seminary not only now but, on the part of many persons, in the last couple of decades, has not been made for another reason: simply because serious young men and women, striving to understand the meaning of God to the world and for themselves — in other words, to achieve a viable Christian theology — have found no really effective aid in this process from the local Church. Such an individual knows that he may have a chance to find bread instead of a stone if he can work at the problem himself, with the best instruments the larger Church can provide in the theological seminary. In my opinion, in North America at least, vast numbers of seminarians are students in search of a theology which the local Church and the minister have not helped them to find. The humorous and oft-quoted prayer of the theologian, "Oh God, if there be a God, save my soul, if I have a soul", while not as characteristic now as twenty years ago, is still the prayer of many. In other words, because the local Church and the minister have failed to give him what he sought, he turns to the theological seminary, which thereby becomes an expensive organ of basic religious education, attracting to itself students who instinctively realize that here at last they may find the words of life. The pathos of this situation becomes tragedy when, as Lex Miller points out, the vocations of many such persons should be elsewhere than in the Christian ministry if "the only real outreach the Church has into the secular order is through the work of Christian men and women in their secular jobs".

If the above reflections are in the main correct, the task of the Student Christian Movement takes on a greater significance and a more profound urgency. Its basic mission remains that of evangelism, and its secondary one — if indeed this is not

evangelism itself — is to give the student the facts of life in the explicitly Christian terms that we call theology. Its tertiary task is then the one which Lex Miller points out may be the function of the Student Volunteer Movement in our day: to call men and women to man the front-line trenches of the Christian warfare wherever these may run. This takes the S.V.M. a long step further than its recent evolution to include "home" as well as "foreign" missions and sets it the task of interpreting Christian vocation in every area of the secular world.

I find myself inclined to differ from Lex Miller on only a few points. One of these is in his setting forth of a Christian philosophy of work, which he admits in a footnote he does only partially. I find his interpretation of the biblical view of work too much derived from Genesis alone and therefore too limited; namely, that work is part of the curse under which lies the whole of men's natural and social life, and that it is not a part of God's full intention for man. Work is to be done first because it is necessary and second in order that we may rest. I agree that on the other hand work is not an end in itself, and that it is romantic to believe that there is something intrinsically valuable in work as such. But between these views there seems to me another Christian view. It is simply the view that in work of any sort, approached in a spirit not merely of acceptance but of affirmation, one sits at the feet of God to learn of His universe and its laws. Through work and through human relations God teaches man his elementary lessons, if I understand the Bible aright — the lessons that help him develop into what we think of as a human being. Until he has become a real human being, worship, his supreme function, is impossible to him. Work can therefore be considered in itself a means of grace, and as such is surely part of God's full intention for man.

I also question Lex Miller's point that "the development of personality" is not a worthy justification of a job. In this machine age when one sees many types of work which end by completely depersonalizing human beings, when one sees the recession of distinct personal entity in the faces in a subway train, for example, can one believe that the function of man's labor in relation to his growth as a person is unimportant? For an example in the other direction, I think of many of my colleagues in the

Student Christian Movement who have achieved through their work (and just in the professional service in the Church which I agree with Lex Miller should not be thought of as the *summum bonum* of the Christian) a maturity as a person, a fulness of life, and a catholicity of human concern that are surely *desiderata* for a child of God. In other words, there is a relation between the nature of a job and the type of person it has a share in producing. We see this fact all about us in both negative and positive examples. A concern with the question of how people become persons borders on the field of Christian psychology which is too closely linked to the field of Christian vocation to be dismissed with a pejorative reference to "the development of personality or some such thing" as a characteristic desire of "our self-centered and subjective-minded generation".

In my opinion, there is justification or condemnation of a job in terms of its success or failure in bringing into being real persons. This is reason enough for the Christian, not to choose for himself the best and most "creative" job in terms of personal growth, but to labor with all his heart and strength to change the social order that our society may eliminate those features which make work deadening and life sub-human. Only thus can all men have the chance to work for God's glory and the good of their fellows, the true vocation of the child of God.

* * *

In *Beyond this Darkness*, Roger Shinn has written a book that is of the greatest help to all thoughtful persons who endeavor to understand the meaning of the tragedies of our time. What he has to say centers around the war and its aftermath, and the problems it poses for the individual and the group. What he says carries a special conviction because of his own experiences during the war; one is impressed with the quality and universality of his insights. Robert Mackie has sent me a comment on this book which should be included here because of the appreciation of its significance by a young French theologian who himself has been a soldier, a prisoner of war, and a member of the Resistance. "I finished Shinn's book last night and found it really good. I cannot venture a judgment about its adequacy and impact

on American youth, but his experience of war and POW life, more tragic and intense than my own, has a deep significance for everybody. He is splendidly realistic in the best sense, with one foot in the biblical realism, with the other in the real world of today, and looking forward with the grim resolution to destroy both the illusions and the disillusionings of our time. What he says on forgiveness is very good indeed."

Roger Shinn discusses at some length the balance sheet of the war in terms of values, and more specifically, what the war did to elements of the Christian faith. *Inter alia*, he mentions the destruction of the "spiritualized optimism" that has passed for Christianity in some quarters, and the loss to the fold of many nominal Christians who found the meaning of Christianity even more vague after the war than they had found it before, and its relevancy more questionable. On the other hand, genuine Christian faith was not weakened by the blows of war, but was rather strengthened. The author explains this in stating that "the war set an atmosphere that Christianity recognizes better than that of the peacetime twentieth century. For Christianity is a religion of crisis... Its great insights and great hopes have come in times of crisis." I wonder if we may not extend that profoundly true generalization to the personal as well as the corporate realm. Does not the spiritual growth of the individual come also, and only, in times of crisis, of the inner death of something which must die in order that something new may live; in other words, by suffering. I believe a case can be made that no growth of the human spirit takes place save through suffering or through love. Often the two are the same, as Jesus Christ showed with devastating clarity on Calvary.

In a fine chapter "On Meeting Death and Suffering" the author discusses the area of human experience which often proves to be the rock on which individual faith is broken. What does Christianity say to men who accept suffering or their own destruction in the name of their faith? What happens to Christian faith in the presence of the suffering of others? And above all, what happens to faith before the whole tragedy of life in a time of war and crisis? What is the meaning of history? Here the author gives a magnificent affirmation of the Christian view of history, that God in Christ has overcome the world,

and that this answer of faith is and must be the ultimate answer.

The question of Force and Love must inevitably appear in a book of this sort, and Roger Shinn ably discusses this problem that has plagued the Christian Church, especially in recent years, and that becomes more acute than ever in the Atomic Age. His answer is sound — “the subordination of force to the principle of law and justice”, which indicates that basically it is a question between force and justice rather than between force and love. It is abundantly clear that the conqueror and the fact of his conquest never represents more than relative justice, no matter how guilty and vile the conquered. Accordingly there must be some judgment superior to the national judgment as to what is just and which nations are just. Here, in my opinion, lies the Christian justification for the limitation of national sovereignty, and not only its justification but its necessity. Man’s natural judgments are fallible at best; consciously or unconsciously they are self-centered, prideful and motivated by the desire for power. The authority of individual judgment in case of dispute has therefore been superseded by the judgment of one’s peers who represent the superior authority of the state. A nation’s judgments project the same fallible qualities into the international scene. The only preventive for the resultant anarchy in which we now live is the giving up of complete national sovereignty. I find myself wishing that Roger Shinn had developed this point more sharply and with its Christian implications. I believe Paul’s doctrine of the rôle of the state can logically and theologically be extended to the rôle of the supra-state in the present crisis in which man lives. Such a rationale should aid Christians and the Christian Church to understand and to undertake the task of bringing men and nations to the next step in the evolution of social relations — the renunciation of anarchic national sovereignties to a world power with real authority. Its judgments will also be fallible, but if they are enforceable they will provide a better approximation of international justice than has heretofore existed. And, what is more to the point, there will be a chance to prevent the complete destruction of human civilization as we now know it.

After these reflections I find the chapter “For Us the Living” singularly impressive. The human race — you and I — live

today on time that has been, not borrowed, but bought and paid for by the lives of others. It is for us the living to work and fight for democracy at home, for justice and peace in the world. We were not and are not worthy to be God's executors of judgment in the world. And, I would add, the tale is not told. Others and we ourselves, fittingly enough, will be the executors of God's judgment on us for our failures and transgressions. God is the Lord of history, yesterday, today and forever, and God is not mocked.

W.M.R.

BEYOND PREJUDICE, A STORY OF THE CHURCH AND JAPANESE AMERICANS. By TORU MATSUMOTO. Friendship Press, New York. \$ 1.00.

It happened at the dinner table in a Swiss chalet. We got talking about Japanese Americans. I said that they were interned for the main part of the war; most of them were American citizens; they had lost a tremendous amount of private property. The sturdy professor looked up from his soup and made two points. He was extremely surprised; he had never heard about it; nor had the others, *n'est-ce pas*? No (point 1). But when he thought it over — was it not right? It would have been dangerous to let heaps of Japanese walk about in America during the war. All belligerents did the same with aliens, *n'est-ce pas*? Yes (point 2). The spoons resumed their activity. At the main dish we had reached a stage where we felt that point 2 involved a problem. They were American citizens, most of them, and yet they were uprooted, relocated, interned and had to leave a lot of precious belongings behind. Is there a clause in American law for such procedures? The discussion on the treatment of Japanese Americans during the war has centred round this question.

Toru Matsumoto, a Japanese American, a minister of the Reformed Church in America and, before his internment, General Secretary of the Japanese Student Christian Movement of North America, has written the story of the hundred thousand Japanese in the United States during the war. (The Japanese Canadians, who underwent in some ways harsher treatment, are not included

in the survey.) Matsumoto has subtitled his book "A Story of the Church and Japanese Americans". After his release he has served with the Church Committee on resettlement of Japanese evacuees. He saw what the Churches did and, without discrediting other agencies the work of which he did not follow very closely, he says about the contribution of the Church in one of the camps: "The unbroken continuity of services is a record of which only the Church can boast, only it would not boast". The Church in the States was concerned about the ramifications of this huge relocation and felt that justice had been violated. It is one of the most encouraging points in Matsumoto's book on such discouraging events that so many denominations clearly saw what was at stake and proceeded to aid and redeem.

But what did the *outsiders* think of the relation between mercy, justice and "protective war-time measures"? Matsumoto hints at it when he says about one large group: "The Church has much to learn from Labour Unions in the matter of race relations, and the Nisei (the young American-born generation of Japanese) have today a keener sense of criticism and appreciation, based upon the performance rather than the slogan of those who approach them". Matsumoto also refers, if briefly, to another group of Americans when he quotes Prof. Rostow of the Yale Law School, who wrote in Harper's Magazine, 1945: "The Japanese exclusion programme rests on five propositions of the utmost potential menace:

1. Protective custody extending over three or four years is a permitted form of imprisonment in the United States.
2. Political opinions, not criminal acts, may contain enough danger to justify such imprisonment.
4. In time of war or emergency the military — perhaps even without the concurrence of the legislature — can decide what political opinions require imprisonment and which groups are infected with them.
3. Men, women and children of a given racial group, both Americans and resident aliens, can be presumed to possess the kind of dangerous ideas which require their imprisonment.

5. The decision of the military can be carried out without indictment, trial, examination, jury, the confrontation of witnesses, counsel for defense, or any of the other safeguards of the Bill of Rights."

The Japanese evacuees have now been released. But two problems remain to be solved. The first one the Americans have to solve for themselves: resettlement — and that is a difficult job. The second one concerns us all alike: what should be the practical Christian stand regarding the problem involved in the relation between the question of national safety, and the question of the legal and human rights of a minority?

The Church gave an answer in principle and in practice through its representative top organs. But to us who happened to be in the States at the time of the relocation, or the resettlement, it was fairly evident that the top level attitude had, generally speaking, not found its way down to the rank and file of Church people.

The book "Beyond Prejudice" is in all its balanced fairness a challenge to Christians, not only to rethink their notions, but to make friends with people living on the other side of man-made barriers. The book is rather a conscientious report than a colourful narrative. But I believe that the reader will draw much useful information from, and find food for further thinking in, Toru Matsumoto's low-pitched *communiqué* from an important salient at the racial frontlines.

B. H.